ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU®

2026 POLICY RESOLUTIONS

FOREWORD

The Illinois Farm Bureau grassroots policy development process provides every voting member the opportunity to make known their policy statements about issues important to them. When properly supported through the grassroots policy development process, these policy statements are considered and may be adopted by the voting delegates at our annual meeting each December.

That delegate action guides the direction of the organization in carrying out its programs each year. It is from this grassroots input and direction that Farm Bureau realizes its strength as an organization serving the needs of our members.

Our focus now shifts to the collective efforts necessary to implement this policy. The commitment of everyone to this policy, adopted by the majority of voting delegates, is needed if we are to succeed. Please join us as we work towards our mission, which is to improve the economic well-being of agriculture and enrich the quality of farm family life.

Philip Nelson, President
Illinois Farm Bureau

Resolutions Committee – 2025

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Alternates
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Paul Beisiegel (St. Clair County)
Rick Edwards (Adams County)

Managers Observing Process
Ashleigh Erbes, Lee County Farm Bureau, Region 1
Anna Ziegler, McLean County Farm Bureau, Region 2
Sydnee Shafer, Piatt County Farm Bureau, Region 3
Parker Hutchcraft, Franklin County Farm Bureau, Region 4

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1. PHILOSOPHY OF FARM BUREAU

Illinois Farm Bureau recognizes freedom, the dignity and worth of the individual, equal opportunity, initiative and compensation for accomplishment, as basic concepts responsible for our country's progress and stature among the nations of the world. We believe the strength of every civilized society is the family. The encouragement of the family unit where morals, values, parental responsibilities, and strong work ethics are exemplified and taught is of paramount importance. This must be considered an individual and local responsibility. We believe in the sanctity of private property and individual rights as provided by the U.S. Constitution, as the basis of American freedom and progress. The principles of our economic system derive from and are consistent with our religious values and goals. Through this system the American people have excelled and produced abundant goods and services for themselves and for people of other nations and have enjoyed widespread educational advantages and religious opportunities.

We believe in incentives, individual responsibility, initiative, freedom, and the right to work without governmental dependence. If our organization and our country are to continue to be free and strong, we must act to determine our own destiny.

Each individual must assume active responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the principles upon which our government was founded and vigorously oppose all programs and policies which erode its foundation. We deplore irresponsible acts of defiance and lack of respect for laws enacted by our elected governmental representatives at all levels.

Illinois Farm Bureau philosophy must represent the thinking of a majority of its members so their organization can achieve maximum effectiveness and influence. The autonomy of the local unit must be maintained to preserve a strong grass roots organizational base.

Illinois Farm Bureau is an organization through which farm people can work together and cooperate with others to strengthen agriculture's role and influence as a vital part of a strong, prosperous economy in a free America. As such, membership necessitates participation as the foremost responsibility of the individual and it is incumbent upon and essential to the success of Illinois Farm Bureau that the membership as a whole act when called upon by the organization.

We will assist members in understanding, influencing, and adapting to the changing realities in production agriculture, the rural economy, and rural family life.

Illinois Farm Bureau members are the foundation on which all our affiliated companies were built.

Our national life is founded on spiritual faith and belief in God. We favor leaving “In God We Trust” on coins and currency and “Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ACTIVATION AND STATUS OF RESOLUTIONS

Policies of the Illinois Agricultural Association are subject to review at any official meeting of the voting delegates.

Resolutions adopted at this annual meeting state the current position of the Illinois Agricultural Association and serve as the formal foundation of governance, decision-making, and organizational direction.

The voting delegates authorize the renumbering, placing, and arranging of the resolutions adopted at this annual meeting with the appropriate subject matter for publication in the current resolutions booklet.

3. COMPETITION/MONOPOLIES

The rapid consolidation of agricultural businesses that serve farmers is a growing concern. We will seek information on the merger and acquisition of agricultural businesses and how such mergers and acquisitions will help or hinder our members.

We support:

1. Congress, and the relevant federal agencies, working together to closely monitor the agribusiness sector with the objective that current anti-trust laws are applied and enforced to the fullest extent in order to allow full and fair pricing competition to flourish.
2. Improvements to existing laws and regulations to empower appropriate agencies to conduct expanded anti-trust review and oversight.
3. Anti-trust laws or department operations providing increased protection to competitive markets.
4. Limitations enforced on mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures by the major competitors in agricultural markets dominated by relatively few firms.
5. Giving the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) broader regulatory authority to include regulation of anti-competitive business behavior to protect farmers as well as consumers.
6. Including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the decision-making procedure with respect to proposed mergers and acquisitions.
7. The Illinois Attorney General’s office investigating agricultural monopolies in Illinois and cooperating with other State Attorneys General and USDOJ in investigating regional monopolies.

We oppose mergers, acquisitions, or leveraged buyouts that create a monopoly of production, marketing, and transportation situations or reduce competition in acquiring, pricing, or transporting agricultural commodities and products.

4. FARM INCOME AND STRUCTURE

The economic well-being of Illinois farmers will continue to be the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY issue of the Illinois Agricultural Association. We encourage opportunities for all segments of agriculture.

We support:

1. The freedom of individual farmers to make their own economic decisions.
2. Programs and legislation of an innovative nature which increase net farm income.
3. Programs and legislation which could include items such as agricultural recapitalization, farm asset transfer plans, lowering input costs through technology, and beginning farmer education and loan programs.
4. Provisions that will protect farmers' investments, even as unsecured creditors, in prepaid agricultural inputs.
5. Research and development of new marketing, finance, computer, farm business management, and personal development programs as needed to improve member income and efforts to increase members' use of those programs.
6. Monitoring and encouraging appropriate federal and state agencies, and to monitor the retail-to-farm price spreads for all major agricultural commodities.
7. Open markets to link members with economic opportunities, including cooperative ventures, presented by rapid changes in agriculture.
8. Facilitating value-added opportunities for farmers.
9. Monitoring trends affecting farmers and strive to place an increased emphasis on educational programs for farmers on various opportunities available.
10. Research into the delivery location, pricing and other factors associated with marketing so producers may receive the best possible price for their production.

5. AGRICULTURAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

To ensure quality education, we endorse the principles of accountability, adequacy, and equity and will actively work to include these principles in any commission, task force, or legislative proposal.

Accountability is the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars to provide a comprehensive education to achieve goals with measurable outcomes.

It includes the size and structure of school districts, the operation/administration of school districts and performance of school districts in achieving desirable educational outcomes.

We support:

1. Requiring a hearing by local school boards before levying a tax for Life Safety and Energy Conservation bonds if such bond issues exceed $100,000.
2. Requiring an equitable local tax effort in every school district as an important part of achieving fairness in educational opportunities for students and fairness in the way education is funded.
3. Continuation of agricultural education programs with emphasis placed on the recruitment and training of qualified agricultural instructors.
4. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus working closely with their local school districts to establish and ensure the maintenance, improvement and continuation of agricultural education programs and FFA. High school agricultural education and the FFA are vital programs for development of the talent and leadership needed in farming and agricultural service industries.
5. Efforts to expand agricultural and vocational programs including post high school training and retraining for skilled agricultural and vocational workers.
6. Retention of primary administrative responsibility for vocational programs at the state and local levels.
7. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus to work with their school districts to implement an updated agricultural education curriculum to meet the needs of today's agriculture. The curriculum should include technology, agricultural science, vocational courses or other classes that would meet the criteria needed to receive credit for a college prep course.
8. The inclusion of agricultural projects in school science fairs.
9. Maintaining the Agricultural Education funding within the Illinois State Budget line item no less than the funding level of $7,050,000 and within the Illinois Department of Agriculture budget of $550,000.
10. The recognition of agricultural education as a Teaching Shortage Area by the Illinois State Board of Education and/or Illinois General Assembly.
11. Encouraging colleges and universities to offer an internship program as part of their curriculum for students studying to become vo-ag instructors. The purpose of the internship would be to gain real world experience by providing hands-on experience working on a farm, at an agriculture business or for agriculture related organizations. To provide a variety of opportunities the internship should not be limited to any one type of farm operation.
12. The Illinois Committee for Ag Education (ICAE) and the Illinois Leadership Council for Ag Education (ILCAE) efforts to promote and improve Agricultural Education within the state.
13. The development of a certified Ag Teacher education program within the Chicago-metropolitan area.
14. Seeking clarity on legislation that allows experiences outside of the classroom in conjunction with a student's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) or Supervised Occupational Experience (SOE).
15. The expansion of Ag Education into the junior high and middle school levels.
16. The expansion of community college agriculture programming.
17. Efforts to increase vocational training at the post-secondary level.
18. Farm Bureau providing resources to promote Ag Literacy to educators.

19. Efforts to revise current associate agricultural degree programs to make the agriculture curriculum more contemporary.
20. Teaching concepts of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in public schools in the State of Illinois. We support amending these teaching concepts to include agriculture: Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, and Math.
21. Retention and enhancement of agricultural curriculum and research at institutions of higher learning.
22. Colleges and universities giving significant weight, recognition, and credits where available to agricultural courses within their admission process.
23. Allowing Illinois community colleges to offer some four-year degrees in high-demand fields.

We oppose any additional licensure requirements or certifications that increase agriculture education teacher shortages or negatively affect program retention.

6. AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

We support an effort to enhance the image of agriculture and promote the positive activities of farmers and agribusiness. This effort enables students and teachers in the classroom to understand the importance and contribution of American agriculture to the U.S. economy and all its citizens. We recommend that a higher priority be placed on increasing resources for Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom programs. Instruction should be directed to all students of all grade levels about environmental, nutritional, agronomic, and animal agriculture issues, and will correlate materials to the standards as prescribed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

We encourage all county Farm Bureaus to participate in Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom and in all agricultural education activities.

7. COMMUNITY COLLEGES

We support:
1. Requiring the state to provide a major part of the operating funds for the Illinois Community College program.
2. Special emphasis on vocational, technical, and semi-technical training.
3. The charging of tuition as partial support for community colleges.
4. Area-wide representation for Community College Boards.
5. County Farm Bureaus surfacing and supporting candidates from rural areas for Community College Boards.

8. EDUCATION

We support:
1. Seeking significant long-term solutions to the problems of financing a quality education for all students through political, legislative, or judicial means.
2. Seeking full funding for general state aid and transportation funding to school districts.
3. Timely delivery of meaningful state incentives to support voluntary school consolidation and other forms of school district reorganization.
4. Teacher/staff professional development to improve teaching quality and to address challenges associated with the School Recognition Process.
5. Seeking the removal of tenure and replacing it with a merit program for teacher evaluation.

6. The goal of preserving and strengthening local control of schools.
7. School district reorganization when determined locally by each district and if approved by front door referendum. The requirements of a reorganization vote should consist of the following:
    A. Either each board of education initiate the reorganization vote or petitions requesting the reorganization vote from 10 percent of the registered voters in each district be required for a referendum.
    B. A majority of those voting on the reorganization be required for passage in either a unit or dual district.
    C. Referendum consideration should be restricted to general elections only.
    D. Taxpayers in the proposed consolidation area should be given the property tax implications of the proposed consolidation in advance of the referendum vote.
8. Efforts to allow school district annexation proceedings to occur through approval of the Regional Board of Trustees provided public notice and hearing requirements are met.
9. The formation of co-operative high schools when such co-operatives would broaden and enhance academic opportunities and will result in economic efficiencies.
10. Innovative pilot efforts that include creative partnerships with business and industry, higher education and government; encourage exploration of new ideas and new approaches to make schools more effective and efficient. Ideas and approaches should include, but not be limited to, Charter Schools, Distance Learning, and new approaches to Vocational Education, Special Education, and transitioning to a new educational model centered on classrooms that emphasize creativity, innovation and teamwork while helping individual students identify their passions earlier in their educational experience.
11. Policies allowing local initiatives to increase academic time such as restructuring the school day, calendar, and schedule.
12. County Farm Bureaus to establish programs which assist members in understanding and participating in their schools. Such programs may include meetings with school boards and school administration to establish open communications about district operations, curriculum development, budgeting, and finance.
13. Full funding of state and federal education mandates by the entity proposing the mandate and a full review of those mandates every three years.
14. Seeking legislation limiting the requirement for schools to fund special education to the education component only. The State of Illinois should be required to provide student housing and medical care within state or federal agencies.
15. Evaluating the legislation and rules concerning the waiver of mandates requested by local school districts. The legislature needs to evaluate each request on its own merit.

Adequacy is financing education at a level sufficient to fund a comprehensive educational program.

We support:

1. The concept of using a foundation level of funding as determined in the Education Funding Advisory Board report. This level should be recalculated annually and be based on the desired level of outcome.
2. The use of prior year Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) to provide accurate information for school budgeting and fiscal management.
3. Retention of categorical grants that address special needs and allow all schools to benefit. Revenue from other categorical grants, which are competitive, should be included in the general state aid formula.
4. A State funded capital program to assist school districts in modernizing existing facilities. This program should include funding for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Equity is fairness in educational opportunities for students and fairness in the way education is funded.

We support:

1. The concept of leveling up (defined as reducing overall variation by increasing the expenditure/revenue per student at the lower end of the distribution).
2. A local individual income tax for education, by front door referendum. The local income tax rate should be a fixed flat rate for all school districts. The revenues from such a tax could be used as local tax effort, to replace property tax revenues, to enrich educational opportunities above the foundation level or some combination thereof.
3. Increased State investment in technology to increase productivity, enhance student achievement, expand learning time, and staff development.
4. Efforts to improve and expand the curriculum and delivery of services in small and rural schools through development of a statewide two-way telecommunication system or other means of communication technology.
5. Cooperation between school districts through inter-governmental agreements.
6. Working with the State Board of Education to simplify grant application requirements.
7. The general concepts of the Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) of the Illinois General Assembly relating to property tax relief, adequate funding for schools, and school reorganization.
8. Monitoring the work of the Vision 20/20 elementary and secondary education reform coalition.
9. Increasing engagement of students in local, state, and federal activities in an effort to gain a better understanding and knowledge of the political process and the importance of civic engagement.

We oppose shifting responsibility for the state's contribution to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) on the local school districts.

9. HIGHER EDUCATION

We support:

1. Eligibility guidelines for publicly financed college scholarships, loans, and grants to ensure farm youth have equal opportunity.
2. A coordinated long-range plan developed by the state institutions of higher learning to maintain quality agricultural education and research facilities.
3. Student loans and continued efforts to recover principal and interest from persons who have defaulted on their government-backed guaranteed student loans.
4. Co-Curricular agricultural organizations which allow hands-on experience for students to further develop their leadership skills.
5. A balance between professors' classroom instruction and research time at institutions of higher learning.
6. Continued collaboration between state supported higher education institutions to implement standardized curricula, including credit hours awarded and requirement fulfilled for the course, to make it easier for students to transfer between all levels of institutions of higher learning.
7. The continuation of the University of Illinois "South Farms." Further university expansion and community development should not sacrifice the advantages which the "South Farms" currently provide for the teaching and research needs of agriculture.
8. The continuation and funding of the existing University of Illinois outlying research centers. Before any long-term changes are made at any of the centers, we encourage seeking input from local stakeholders at or near the center.
9. The study of funding quality and cooperation of agricultural programs at institutions of higher education.
10. Changing the selection process for all state of Illinois funded public university Boards of Trustees in order to make the board more accountable to the voters and taxpayers of the state. We will also seek changes in how these Boards of Trustees conduct their meetings

in order to ensure items cannot be added to the agenda and voted on without public debate and input.

11. The current unified Southern Illinois University Board of governance with multiple campuses to better provide cost effective administration and better use of taxpayer's dollars.

We oppose:

1. Efforts of the Illinois Board of Higher Education to mandate additional course requirements for entrance to Illinois public universities.
2. The selling and privatization of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission’s secondary market student loan portfolio.

10. UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

A viable University of Illinois Extension will help individuals, families, farms, businesses, and communities adapt to change in an increasingly technical world. The University of Illinois Extension and the Land Grant University system must maintain the expertise needed to train competent people for programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer science, 4-H and youth development, and community and economic development. To meet these goals, the University of Illinois Extension should:

1. Be a conduit for information exchange between the research community, farmers, and the citizens of Illinois.
2. Increase clientele access to and understanding of multi-media data information systems.
3. Assess the needs of their clientele and focus their efforts on these needs.
4. Maintain fair and equal access to the University of Illinois Extension resources, information, and programs.
5. Give counties more flexibility in the hiring practices of educators. The university should develop options where units may join together to hire specialist(s) to help more farmers and individuals at the county level.
6. Educate the general public that the University of Illinois Extension is a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
7. Educate the general public about production agriculture’s primary contribution to the food, fiber, nursery and greenhouse growing industries and other U.S. food sources.

We support:

1. Continued public funding of the University of Illinois Extension and urge county Farm Bureaus to participate in the development of the University of Illinois Extension as an efficient educational organization in their county and support the continuation of basic agricultural education programs for Illinois families.
2. Requiring a full accounting of all transactions of the Extension Unit to be presented to that Unit's Advisory Council at each regular meeting.
3. Maintaining the conference judging format in order to ensure maximum 4-H member participation and encourage public display of these projects.

11. ENERGY

We support:

1. A national and Illinois energy policy focused on meeting or exceeding our country's needs by using a blend of renewable and non-renewable sources. This policy considers national energy security, sound agricultural land use, protection of the environment and decreased dependence on foreign energy sources.

2. Efficient and reliable infrastructure that consistently meets the energy needs of rural and urban areas while encouraging market competition to keep energy costs as low as possible. This includes sufficient energy supply for farms and grain elevators when needed for the production and storage of agricultural products.
3. Independent and University research to evaluate energy conservation, cost-efficiency, and rural impact of current and/or new energy sources. This includes the research of coal gasification and other new technologies.
4. The use of domestic sources of energy, such as Illinois coal, mainland and offshore oil reserves, and the building of new refineries and supply pipelines that can produce a steady supply of energy.
5. Working with legislators to enable more U.S. oil and gas production by opening known oil and gas reserves in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), offshore and on the U.S. mainland, exploring for additional oil and gas sites, and building new oil and gas refineries.
6. Education, and incentives to further the development of renewable energy including, but not limited to, renewable fuels, wind, solar, biomass, and methane digesters. This includes the basic goals and objectives of the 25x25 Alliance promoting renewable energy.
7. Renewable Energy Standards (RES) to encourage the development of more renewable sources for energy production.
8. Exploring ways to increase propane storage on farms and at grain drying facilities.

Nuclear Energy

We support:

1. The use of existing nuclear power generators as a source of needed energy along with adequate safeguards to ensure its safe and environmentally sound use.
2. The construction of a new generation of nuclear power facilities and work to repeal the State of Illinois' moratorium on construction of new nuclear facilities.
3. Programs to provide farmers with adequate protection for themselves, their crops, and their livestock from radiation contamination from nuclear plants or nuclear materials.
4. Efforts to ensure that utilities operating nuclear reactors maintain the appropriate legal and financial responsibility for damage to property, livestock and personal health caused by the operation or malfunctioning of such reactors.
5. Federal research on the safe development and use of small and efficient reactors to assure the long-term supply of electricity.
6. The proper agencies of the federal government to address immediately the problem of permanent storage or re-use of radioactive waste.

We oppose the siting of nuclear waste facilities near known aquifers where pollution could occur.

Renewable Energy

We support:

1. Renewable energy generation (wind, solar, and battery energy storage systems (BESS)) as a component of the energy portfolio of the U.S.
2. The establishment of statewide standards for commercial renewable energy systems that provide adequate protection of public health and safety, protect private property rights, and allow for reasonable development of commercial renewable energy system projects. Such standards should include, but are not limited to, farmland preservation, protection of natural resources, safety issues from glare, property setbacks, other siting issues, performance bonds and ensuring adequate funds are in place for decommissioning and non-payment of property taxes. Developments should be prioritized to be placed on non-prime farmland. Projects should be required to minimize impact on adjacent non-participating landowners.
3. Requiring an Agriculture Impact Mitigation Agreement (AIMA) to be filed with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) for all commercial renewable energy projects and allows for the enforcement of the AIMA by the IDOA when the agreement has been violated by stopping the project until the violation has been corrected.

4. Requiring the owner of the commercial renewable energy project to pay 100% of the property taxes assigned to the Parcel Identification Number (PIN) designated for the commercial renewable energy facilities until they are decommissioned and re-classified to farmland.
5. County Farm Bureau efforts to work with their county officials and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to develop appropriate commercial renewable energy systems land use regulations for their county.
6. Counties granting local SWCDs the right to inspect violations of any county land use regulations or to identify violations of AIMA provisions during construction, maintenance, and deconstruction of commercial renewable energy projects. The cost to SWCDs for providing service to the county should be borne by the commercial renewable system developer.
7. Requiring a comprehensive drainage plan to be developed for farmland where surface or subsurface drainage will be impacted as a result of the construction, maintenance, or deconstruction of a proposed commercial renewable energy system.
8. Requiring commercial renewable energy developers, contractors, and subcontractors to be informed of the requirements of the signed AIMA and maintain a copy at the commercial renewable energy project site.
9. Commercial renewable energy projects being considered non-agricultural production.
10. Requiring commercial renewable energy projects to carry general liability insurance and environmental and pollution liability insurance sufficient to cover all risk.
11. Efforts to locate commercial renewable energy projects on marginal or underused lands, including brownfield sites, highway rights-of-way, entrance and exit ramps, rest areas, welcome centers, embankments, on Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) non-tillable properties, on urban and rural roof tops, vacant lots, farmsteads, and/or over parking areas, rather than productive tillable farmland.
12. Statewide regulations requiring a notice of intent to construct for commercial renewable energy projects.
13. Statewide regulations requiring a hearing prior to the construction of a commercial renewable energy project.
14. Public and private efforts to develop solar energy projects in the State of Illinois.
15. Continuation of the current property tax assessment method and rate for commercial wind turbines and solar energy projects in Illinois.
16. Requiring wind farms to have curtailment agreements to mitigate impact to doppler radar in areas where radar coverage may be impacted by wind turbine installation.
17. A consistent property tax assessment method and rate for commercial BESS in Illinois.
18. Legislation allowing the landowner the option to terminate a solar lease agreement if the solar panels fail to produce energy for a period longer than 12 consecutive months.
19. BESS being constructed, maintained, and operated in accordance with the original equipment manufacturer's guidance and national industry standards and regulations. BESS shall comply with the most current adopted edition of the National Electric Safety Code and the International Fire Code.
20. Each BESS enclosure being equipped with a fire suppression system to respond to a thermal event.
21. Environmental cleanup and monitoring of the materials inside the BESS, should they leak or corrode.
22. Prioritization of public funding towards solar projects with a verified agrivoltaics component.
23. A scientific life cycle assessment and rating system of energy use and environmental impacts (including land use changes and greenhouse gas emissions) of renewable energy systems including solar, wind, nuclear, hydrogen, green natural gas, and BESS.
24. Behind the meter systems being exempt from the definition of commercial energy systems.
25. Requiring renewable energy companies to notify road authorities, adjacent landowners, tenants and local emergency response agencies of any road closures related to project

construction or maintenance activities. Companies shall communicate alternative routes and provide an estimated timeline for the duration of each closure.

We oppose:

1. Granting commercial renewable energy development companies eminent domain authority.
2. Commercial renewable energy projects creating any negative impacts to both surface and subsurface soil productivity from construction, deconstruction, or maintenance activities that violate construction during wet weather regulations.

12. RENEWABLE FUELS

We support:

1. Expanding the use of all renewable fuels.
2. Approval and use of greater ethanol blends in high-octane fuels to help automobile manufacturers meet increasing regulatory standards.
3. Making permanent state and federal tax credits and other programs that provide incentives for the use of bio-based fuel additives, renewable fuels, cellulosic fuels, and the renewal of these tax credits.
4. State incentives that stimulate an increase in the demand for ethanol and biodiesel.
5. The Renewable Fuels Standard 2 (RFS 2) as passed in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.
6. Government-supported research directed toward reducing production costs, improving conversion technology, and developing new feedstocks which shall not be limited to cellulosic and biomass renewable fuel production.
7. An increase in the ethanol blending standard.
8. Programs and efforts to increase renewable fuel production in Illinois.
9. Investment in and development of the appropriate infrastructure (including, but not limited to, the funding of biofuel blender pumps and the standardization of all new gasoline dispensers to be UL Certified for a minimum E-25) to support the expanded use of renewable fuels.
10. The continuation of a renewable fuels use requirement on all state owned and/or leased vehicles when and where available.
11. The cost of purchasing biodiesel as an allowable expense in the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program.
12. Federal research for better performing engines that run on E85 fuels.
13. Research on new uses and markets for co-products of renewable fuels production and investigation of synergistic relationships in renewable fuels production systems and other potential markets.
14. Continued research into ruminant and non-ruminant feed utilization of renewable fuels Distiller's Dried Grains with solubles (DDGs) co-products and farmer education on appropriate use of DDGs in livestock diets.
15. Quality control standards at renewable fuel plants that result in uniform, high quality co-products from renewable fuels.
16. Testing of ethanol at terminals to ensure uniform quality prior to blending.
17. Nationwide adoption and implementation of American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards for all renewable fuels.
18. Requiring retailers to display the percentage blend of biodiesel blend and its content upon development of accepted standards and accurate tests to measure those blends.
19. Efforts to educate consumers and industry on the benefits of biofuel blends higher than ten percent.
20. Transparency in the use of federal and state renewable fuels tax incentives that promote the use of domestically grown commodities for domestically produced renewable fuels.

21. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and other agricultural and allied organizations and industries in aggressive public information campaigns which support renewable fuels and challenge any misinformation.
22. Encouraging farmers, affiliated companies, and other agricultural businesses to use renewable fuels.
23. Renewable fuel use by school districts and units of local government.
24. Development of engines and air-cooled outdoor power equipment using a higher percentage of renewable fuels.
25. Renewable fuels as an octane or cetane enhancer, fuel source, or lubricity agent to improve air quality.
26. Encouraging automakers to produce more flex-fuel vehicles and those that can run on mid-level blends with the goal of eliminating the so-called "blend wall."
27. U.S. Department of Defense adoption and use of renewable fuels.
28. Efforts to expand the use of renewable fuel in commercial aviation, maritime, and other large-volume users.
29. A move toward high-octane, low carbon fuels and the automobile designs to utilize Real Octane Number (RON) 95 or higher renewable fuel blends.
30. The reallocation of each gallon of ethanol and biodiesel waived by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the benefit of small oil refineries.
31. Creation of a statewide biodiesel blending standard at B20 or higher.
32. The use of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Argonne Lab's Greenhouse Gasses, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Technologies (GREET) model for carbon intensity scoring for agricultural biofuel feed stocks.
33. Ethanol and fertilizer plants converting CO2 into products like green methanol and/or other such usable products.
34. The extension of IRS tax code section 45Z beyond 2027.

We oppose:

1. Attempts to defund, repeal, or rollback implementation of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).
2. EPA's misuse of its waiver authority for the purposes of reducing the amount of renewable fuel blended.
3. Expiration of remaining renewable fuel tax credits.
4. Use of federal renewable fuels tax incentives for imported renewable fuels or renewable fuels produced with imported agricultural commodities.

13. UTILITIES AND PIPELINES

We support:

1. Continuation of work for quality rural telephone, broadband, and electric service with just and reasonable rates.
2. The development of a higher visibility and formal involvement in electric rate issues by:
   A. Cooperating with other intervenors in major rate cases involving farmers.
   B. Interacting with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) and utilities seeking to modify rate designs to favor agricultural users of electricity.
   C. Monitoring utilities and the ICC to ensure that "cost of service" rate designs and regulations are not put in place which would economically harm agriculture.
3. Building a coalition of groups and organizations with identifiable common interests regarding electric rate issues.
4. Strengthening the working relationship with the rural electric cooperative system.
5. Working to simplify and streamline the regulation of the utility business while maintaining the goal of prompt, effective, and efficient regulation.
6. The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to assume the role of arbitrator in certain utility cases involving farmland. Where requested, we will recommend language for

inclusion in landowners' right-of-way agreements that would appoint the IDOA, Bureau of Farmland Protection as arbitrator in certain cases where disputes arise. Upon request, we will hold meetings with landowners before and after completion of the project to address questions and concerns of landowners.

7. Working with American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) to seek federal legislation requiring all federally permitted utility projects to have minimum construction standards in place before granting permits to utility companies wishing to construct on farmland.
8. Working with electric and gas suppliers in Illinois to evaluate potential load requirements for agricultural operations and develop a long-range plan to upgrade existing infrastructure to handle future demand loads.
9. The appointment of the ICC and encourage the appointment of at least one commissioner who is knowledgeable about agriculture.
10. Regulations requiring all pipeline companies to manage existing pipelines shallower than two (2) feet and maintain to a level of five (5) feet of cover from existing grade within two years of discovery, subject to the landowner discretion.
11. Legislation requiring all future underground pipelines being buried across agricultural lands to follow the contour of the surface maintaining a minimum topcover of 60 inches.
12. Action by the ICC to adjust all Illinois utility companies' summer rate time period cut-off dates in order to achieve a statewide September 15 summer ending date.
13. Legislation that would provide for some form of constitutional taxation of underground pipelines by the State of Illinois and payment in lieu of taxes to benefit local units of government where pipelines are located.
14. Regulatory oversight of anhydrous ammonia pipelines by the Surface Transportation Board due to the monopolistic nature of the industry.
15. Legislation that would create a surcharge or a fee-based "Pipeline Fund" to address potential environmental problems caused by abandoned pipelines.
16. Legislation requiring pipeline companies to remove abandoned or obsolete pipelines from the ground and to ensure that the affected areas be returned to the original productivity.
17. Efforts to assess telecommunication needs in rural areas and ensure that telecommunication providers in partnership with rural communities meet those identified needs.
18. Legislation requiring utility companies to remove municipal taxes from bills of rural residences.
19. Requiring appropriate landowner, trustee, or tenant notification in all utility easement agreements.
20. Requiring all utilities installing equipment on the right-of-ways to inform the adjacent property owner at least 30 days prior to the proposed change so the landowner can inform the utility of field drainage tiles, and if needed, watch the work conducted to make sure that the field tile is not damaged. If damaged, the utility should be required to properly fix any damage as soon as possible or within 90 days at the discretion of the landowner or tenant.
21. Seeking to develop a positive approach, to protect farmland, farm owners, and operators from losses caused by utility installations. The utilities should be constructed in a manner to cause the least possible interference with agriculture.
22. Efforts to further enhance the 8-1-1 internet-based location service to accommodate whole field utility location services, using whole field boundaries.
23. Seeking the requirement, that upon notice to a utility company that owns or controls underground utilities, including fiber optic equipment and lines, by an individual or entity who is planning on excavating under or over such lines, the utility company shall excavate a minimum area to expose such line. This minimum area excavated by the utility company shall be large enough to allow the individual or entity planning on excavating to conduct their needed work in a way as not to damage the line.
24. Legislation to allow landowners to recover attorney fees if they prevail in a lawsuit enforcing the terms of an easement, or to recover damage to property or crops with a public utility and/or their subcontractor.

25. Seeking legislation requiring all utility and pipeline projects that are constructed/buried across agricultural land complete an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement (AIMA) with the IDOA before landowners are contacted about the project.
26. Seeking legislation that requires pipelines and utilities to enter into an AIMA agreement with the IDOA that strengthens the enforcement of the AIMA by the IDOA when the agreement has been violated by a utility or pipeline company and the project can be stopped until the project violation has been corrected.
27. Seeking legislation to establish an obligation on the part of the ICC to require a finding from the IDOA that minimum construction standards are required for any proposed utility projects before companies are granted permits to construct improvements.
28. Seeking further study on the proper means to compensate farm owners affected by utility installations. This should require certain minimum standards for compensation agreements or annual payments for certain structures. Compensation should include cost of repairs to damaged soil structure, conservation practices in place, infrastructure and crop losses as a result of damaged infrastructure.
29. Seeking legislation to require all utilities, proposing acquisition of rights-of-way for utility projects, to send written notice of intention to acquire such right-of-way to landowners and lessees at least 90 days prior to any personal contact with the landowners and lessees for purposes of negotiating such right-of-way acquisition.
30. Legislation that any blanket easement created after January 1, 2018, (or other appropriate future date) shall be void and considered against public policy and wholly unenforceable.
31. Seeking legislation to amend the Expedited Review provisions of the Illinois Public Utilities Act to better protect the property rights of landowners who may be impacted by utility projects. Also remove the 45-day deadline the ICC must follow when ruling on eminent domain requests for electric transmission line projects filed under expedited review and instead, request a reasonable timeline for the ruling.
32. Seeking to eliminate the practice of Citizens Utility Board (CUB) literature being inserted in vehicle license renewal notices.
33. Establishing minimum setbacks for overhead transmission lines from sensitive structures (private and public schools, licensed daycare facilities, residences, hospitals, agricultural irrigation systems, and agricultural livestock production facilities) of at least the following distances - unless waived by agreement - from the edge of respective power line easements for new electrical transmission line projects.
    A. 100 feet for 50-138 kV line.
    B. 150 feet for 139-339 kV line.
    C. 250 feet for 340 kV or larger line.
34. Federal regulations requiring telephone and mobile phone customers to "opt in" before receiving phone calls from solicitors who they have not done business with.
35. Requiring all entities to obtain explicit and obvious permission from customers before providing their phone number to another entity.
36. Requiring telecommunications companies to remove abandoned or obsolete above-ground telecommunications fixtures from rights-of-way or to properly maintain them, if still in use.
37. All CO2 pipelines should be constructed to protect public safety and should adhere to the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) standards.
38. CO2 pipelines should add a distinctive odor to the CO2 to alert people to its presence, utilize enhanced leak detection with automatic shutoffs, automatic notification of emergency services in an area where a leak has been detected, and provide ongoing training and equipment donations to first responders in the pipeline area.
39. Developers of carbon dioxide pipelines and storage projects demonstrating progress at securing willing agreements for pipeline easements and willing agreements for storage rights of at least 75% of easements and agreements necessary prior to approval of the project by the ICC.
40. Declaring stored carbon dioxide that moves into pore space located within the property lines of a property without an agreement for carbon dioxide storage to be a trespass.

41. Fair and just compensation for non-consenting landowners for CO2 pipelines and sequestration.
42. Repealing the temporary moratorium on the approval of carbon dioxide pipelines for pipeline projects located on land owned by the pipeline operator or where eminent domain will not be utilized for the pipeline right-of-way.

14. ABOVEGROUND FUEL STORAGE TANKS

We support revisions to rules regarding aboveground fuel storage tanks to allow each farm to have enough aboveground fuel storage to receive a transport load of each specific fuel.

15. AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

We support:

1. Agricultural practices that recognize economic benefits and the ability to manage risks involved with production agriculture.
2. Working with other interested agencies and organizations to assure pollution standards and tolerances are scientifically formulated and economically feasible.
3. Farmer participation in voluntary, third-party environmental assessments as a means to demonstrate compliance prior to an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) inspection as a means to meet IEPA requirements.
4. A farmer's right to build livestock buildings and other agricultural structures without the threat of litigation as long as they abide by current regulations and guidelines at the time of site approval.
5. Efforts to provide adequate funds to state and federal agencies for the purpose of aiding in the construction of agricultural pollution control devices and implementation of other agricultural practices to meet mandated standards.
6. Working closely with IEPA to develop communication strategies to livestock farmers that are not intimidating, do not involve media or press releases, and develop reasonable timelines to address enforcement issues.
7. Modification of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) to exclude farms from the provisions of the Act. Reporting and notification requirements in SARA are too stringent and inappropriate for farming operations.
8. Efforts to exempt farmers from liability provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Regulatory Cleanup and Liability Act (CERCLA).
9. Research and information examining the effects of crop protection and animal health products on the food chain and the environment.
10. The development of an overall rating system to measure the acute and chronic effects of oral and dermal exposure to crop protection and animal health products.
11. Exempting property owners from financial responsibility for pollution that resulted from previously-accepted farming practices.
12. The removal of setbacks on chemical application in conjunction with tile inlet structures unless proven necessary by scientific data.
13. Changes in the Worker Protection Standards so posting of field entrances does not unduly alarm consumers about the use of certain crop protection products.
14. Legislation which will require a verified name and address from the complainants on all pollution complaint reports.
15. Increased government funding to ensure that landowners are adequately compensated whenever farmland is used for purposes intended to achieve the government’s natural resource goals.
16. Increased dollars for educational, promotional, incentive-based, and technical assistance programs and developing the guidelines for the implementation of programs at the local

level. We also support developing a separate source of funding either under conventional agricultural conservation programs or U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development for the establishment of buffers.

17. Legislation indemnifying farmers and farm owners for the cost of clean-up and other damages arising from the pollution of their land by the willful or negligent acts of others.
18. Congress setting specific guidelines and restraints on federal agencies charged with implementing and enforcing federal law. We believe that Congress should provide for strong congressional oversight of regulatory and significant agency actions as well as a willingness to override unacceptable agency actions. We support congressional scrutiny of agencies to prohibit regulatory agencies from administering laws, to deter adoption of agency rules and actions that circumvent statutory intent. Specific efforts should be made to oversee and to reform the inspection and rule-making authority of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).
19. Environmental regulations clarifying that any discharge occurring prior to the operation of a livestock farm does not require the owner/operator of the farm to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the operation of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO).
20. Efforts by the IDOA to protect pollinators that involve farmer stakeholders and arrive at reasonable solutions that protect both crops and pollinators.
21. The planting and maintenance of pollinator habitats.
22. The planting of pollinator habitat on land currently enrolled in USDA programs.

We oppose:

1. Efforts to place restrictions or moratoriums on a farmer's ability to manage his or her farming operation in a manner consistent with BMPs. Existing operations should not be restricted from expansion nor have undue limits placed upon them due to the encroachment of others.
2. Regulations for septic systems that are not science-based and do not take into consideration the economic impacts on the homeowner and on the local government.
3. Requiring a NPDES permit for pesticide applications when the applicator complies with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).
4. The requirement of a CAFO to need an NPDES permit if it does not discharge.
5. Efforts by the IEPA to regulate stored hay as a stored feed.

16. ATMOSPHERIC QUALITY

We support:

1. Policies that keep agriculture viable and address the costs and benefits of those programs using sound, economic analysis.
2. Alternative energy sources which will minimize atmospheric pollution.
3. Providing incentives to industries seeking to become more energy efficient or to reduce emissions of identifiable atmospheric pollutants.
4. Cooperation of organizations and governments, foreign and domestic, to develop better understanding and research on the implications of atmospheric pollution and the means of preventing it.
5. Providing incentives to individuals seeking to reforest fragile lands that are currently in agricultural production.
6. The development of engines that utilize affordable technology to reduce pollution.
7. Requiring the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to use science-based methods when identifying violations for atmospheric pollution.
8. Passage of a Congressional resolution which strips the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of its authority to regulate greenhouse gases.
9. Research on greenhouse gases.

We oppose:

1. Restrictions on existing off-road equipment emissions.
2. Any changes in the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards that reduce the availability of trucks.

17. DISPOSAL OF WASTE

We support:

1. Waste volume reduction at the source. Every effort should be made to avoid generating waste products.
2. Recycling and reuse. We encourage manufacturers to develop cost-effective uses for recyclable products. We will work towards the development of incentives to create additional markets and uses for these recycled products.
3. Retailers and consumers using returnable, recyclable, and degradable containers.
4. Research into and the development of minimum standards for bioplastics, biodegradable, and compostable materials.
5. Research on voluntary recycling options for agricultural plastics.
6. Source separation, which includes:
   - A. Incentives for the return of all glass, plastic, or metal beverage containers.
   - B. Local recycling programs.
   - C. Composting. We support research on the effects of using yard waste on agricultural land.
7. Research on the effects of energy recovery from incineration.
8. Combustion for volume reduction. Where it can be shown to be economically feasible and environmentally safe, incineration of solid waste before disposing in a landfill.
9. Landfilling as a final alternative.
10. Legislation specifying that publication requirements for public hearings on the siting of solid waste disposal facilities be the same as those of the Illinois Truth in Taxation Act.
11. The ability of a municipality to reject the location of a landfill within 1 1/2 miles of the municipality's boundary.
12. Appropriate local governments providing refuse disposal services at a reasonable cost to residents within their area if no private services are available.
13. Improvement of regulations to ensure safe transportation of hazardous waste.
14. Enforcement of existing laws and regulatory programs which require environmentally safe waste disposal systems.
15. Encouraging county Farm Bureaus to actively monitor permit applications for siting of non-agricultural pollution control facilities submitted to their County Boards.
16. Delegation agreements granting counties authority to regulate landfill operations within their jurisdiction, including hours of operation and the height of landfills.
17. Efforts to impose appropriate fines and penalties on waste disposal violations.
18. Reasonable disposal fees on residential waste to help avoid dumping in rural areas.
19. Allowing local governments to charge a higher fee, tax, or surcharge on special waste and out-of-area waste than on local residential waste.
20. Efforts to have Illinois classify out-of-state waste as stringently as its classification in the state of origin.
21. Regular and thorough inspection of waste disposal sites.
22. Research into laser gasification for mining of landfills and disposal of garbage.
23. Allowing farmers to burn or bury old agricultural buildings and brush on existing sites.
24. Allowing the burning and burying of building debris in cases of natural disasters.
25. Changes to the laws and policies regarding used tire collections, including:
   - A. An increase in the number of times an individual can participate in a tire clean-up event.
   - B. Allowing non-governmental organizations to sponsor a used tire collection program.

C. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) setting up drop off areas for used tires.

26. Continued research on the safe application of biosolids on agricultural farmland. State and federal agencies should make research results on immediate and long-term effects of biosolid applications available to farmers.
27. Government agencies approving land application of nutrient-rich biosolids on agricultural land.
28. Providing indemnity payments for agricultural products, livestock, or property that are deemed unusable for its' intended purposes due to contaminated biosolids.
29. Farmers and landowners not being held responsible for contamination of agricultural products, livestock, and land should their property become contaminated by biosolids.
30. Generators of biosolids providing farmers with an analysis of nutrients, heavy metals, trace elements, and substances with contaminant thresholds as defined by local, state, and federal regulatory agencies.
31. Using proven current scientific information when developing policies concerning applications of biosolids.
32. An environmentally safe and financially acceptable method to dispose of or recycle used oil and unwanted farm and home chemicals.
33. Research to make biosolids safe for use in agricultural applications.

We oppose:

1. Transportation of solid waste over long distances for disposal.
2. Efforts which lead to the importation of solid waste into rural areas without proper consideration being given to residents neighboring the disposal site.
3. Attempts to weaken the role of local governments or the criteria by which the sites are judged in the siting of non-agricultural pollution control facilities.

18. DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Drainage

We support:

1. More coordination among drainage districts and other government entities in a common watershed.
2. Landowners within an inactive drainage district to reactivate the district or to consolidate the district with that of an active neighboring drainage district. In the event that reactivating or consolidating a drainage district is not feasible, we encourage all property owners, including state and federal entities, to maintain drainage systems on their property.
3. Uniform interpretation of regulations to allow stream and drainage ditch maintenance practices consistent with good husbandry, such as removing silt, trees, restoring stream banks, and restoring drainage ditches to their optimal condition without the requirement of a permit.
4. Coordination among the various district offices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) serving Illinois to foster more fair and consistent administration of the Clean Water Act and other laws and regulations.
5. Working with other groups to develop appropriate means to resolve drainage problems arising from land development and road construction. Such means should include holding developers financially responsible for damages done to agricultural drainage.
6. Mandating that units of local government require developers to provide surety bonds to guarantee full compliance with the drainage law in regard to land development and road construction.
7. Techniques and voluntary programs through agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that put more emphasis on stabilization of stream banks.
8. Enforcement of the concepts within the Illinois Drainage Code which prevent all governmental agencies from using public right-of-way to channel drainage water onto

private land without considering the volume of water being drained or the absorption rate of the soils receiving the water.

9. A requirement that soil erosion control be considered as a part of all drainage plans.
10. A reasonable use standard for management of agricultural drainage.
11. Making NRCS the lead agency in determining if a drainage project needs a 404 permit and providing the local contact for that permitting process. If a 404 permit is needed, we support making the Corps the only agency in charge of issuing a permit for drainage projects.
12. Means to require any incorporated area or drainage district with a population of 5,000 or more to pay downstream drainage districts for maintenance and expansion of waterways that receive the accumulated increase in water flow.
13. Drainage districts as independent units of local government and their right to retain control.
14. Educational programs for drainage district commissioners concerning their duties, state and federal regulations impacting them, and the need to properly and routinely maintain the district's drainage facilities.
15. Drainage commissioners' authority to accumulate or build up a fund which shall not exceed an amount equal to the total of five years annual maintenance assessment.
16. Efforts to exempt prior constructed waterways to drainage channels from archaeological study requirements.
17. Efforts to remove beavers and their structures when they alter drainage resources.
18. Requiring the payment of drainage district assessments levied on state owned land.

We oppose:

1. Unwarranted interference with drainage work.
2. Legislation that would forcibly diminish or usurp the power and authority of drainage districts.

Stormwater Management

We support:

1. Requiring money collected for stormwater management be used exclusively for control of runoff in the watershed where it was collected, not in an unrelated watershed.
2. Representation on any county stormwater management commission to have mandated broad-based makeup, including municipal, engineering, agricultural, industrial, commercial, and homeowner voting members.
3. Requiring municipalities to integrate stormwater management control structures and plans into any new or existing development.
4. The use of tax credits, abatements, or incentive payments to property owners who construct, maintain, and use approved stormwater management devices (e.g., catch ponds, lagoons, holding basins, terraces, contour farming, pasture land, timberland).
5. Efforts requiring that new commercial and residential developments be planned for anticipated runoff and constructed with the structures necessary to control it.
6. Encouraging local governmental units to unite to solve stormwater problems stemming from impervious surfaces in watersheds within their jurisdictions so long as the power and authority of drainage districts are not forcibly usurped or diminished. For purposes of stormwater management, farmland would not be considered an impervious surface.
7. Efforts to amend the Soil and Water Conservation District Act to expand the role of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to address urban wetland and stormwater management problems. The Soil and Water Conservation Districts should make every effort to coordinate and cooperate with other organizations and agencies within the district to achieve these goals.
8. Amendments to the enabling legislation of stormwater management agencies that would explicitly exempt agricultural land and practices.
9. Reducing the amount of taxes and fees assessed against property for stormwater management purposes by the amount of taxes and fees assessed against that property by a drainage district.

We oppose:

1. Granting any stormwater management authority the power to regulate farmland drainage.
2. The establishment of a county stormwater runoff management planning commission without voter approval.
3. The use of eminent domain by a stormwater commission except for specific and immediate use for stormwater runoff control.
4. The involuntary dissolution of agricultural drainage districts and their administration and taxing levy being assumed by the county stormwater commission.
5. Any efforts to require agriculture to pay for more than its fair share of any taxing plan or any effort to force agricultural lands to receive excessive and unobstructed runoff caused by upstream development that lacks reasonable stormwater management structures.

19. DUE PROCESS

We support:

1. Requiring all governmental agencies to notify landowners and farm operators of possible violations in writing, stating specific findings and charges on all farm visits.
2. Landowners and farm operators be given a reasonable amount of time to correct the possible violations before legal action is taken by the governmental agency.
3. Governmental agencies being required to prove intent to violate as a part of every prosecution.
4. Any conviction being based on due process, including trial by jury.
5. Governmental agencies, should they lose a court case, being held accountable for court costs and associated costs to landowners and farm operators.

20. ENDANGERED SPECIES

We support:

1. A moratorium on additional listings under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in its current form until such time as it is amended and updated to accommodate the needs of both endangered and threatened species and humans with complete respect for private property rights within the framework of the United States Constitution.
2. Endangered and threatened species protection that is achieved through providing incentives to private landowners and public land users rather than by imposing land use restrictions and penalties.
3. The burden of proof for listing being on the petitioner, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service (together, the Agencies), rather than on the general public.
4. Scientific and peer-reviewed data being used as the basis for listing a species, as well as the basis for the development of regional or state conservation plans involving those species.
5. A legitimate state-level process of involving stakeholders, including farm organizations, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, and agricultural representatives, in discussions around listing decisions and conservation planning.
6. A more efficient process for the delisting of species that allows the Agencies to achieve the stated objectives of the ESA: to recover and delist species.
7. Reasonable assurance mechanisms at the federal and state level that allow farmers to conduct normal farming activities without fear of liability under the ESA and Illinois' Endangered Species Protection Act.

We oppose:

1. The recognition of species that are considered under threat versus endangered to be a factor in liabilities to private landowners.
2. A definition of critical habitat that includes areas without the current presence of an endangered species.
3. The listing of the monarch butterfly as a threatened or endangered species.
4. Any group that receives funding pursuant to the ESA or as a result of litigation associated with the ESA, from being able to petition, support or encourage the listing of a species.

21. FARMING METHODS

We support farming methods that result in:

1. Profitability.
2. Environmental stewardship.
3. The production of a safe food supply.
4. An adequate supply of high-quality agricultural commodities to meet current and future demand.

We support:

1. Research aimed at reducing overall inputs needed to sustain a profitable farming operation.
2. Incentives that encourage farmers to accept the risk of testing non-traditional means of farming.
3. Efforts to provide information to farmers on proven means of improving the efficiency of inputs.
4. Research to study soil health and its future productivity.
5. The use of an integrated pest management program to control pests in crop production.

We oppose any attempt to mandate any method of farming.

22. FORESTRY

We support:

1. State and federal incentives for active forest management of privately-owned forests and woodlands in Illinois.
2. The planting of trees on land that is unable to meet conservation compliance standards to help control soil erosion and increase timber resources.
3. Ongoing research monitoring and education regarding forest health.
4. Repealing the Timber Tax.

We oppose:

1. Any funds generated by a Timber Tax going to anything besides forest management incentives for landowners. Until repeal, we support.
2. The change of the Shawnee National Forest becoming a designated National Park and Climate Preserve.

23. GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

We support:

1. Quantitative and updated scientific research on carbon emissions (livestock, modern farm equipment, and current agricultural production practices) and carbon capture to establish a baseline.
2. Science-based research and economic analysis, not cultural consensus, to conclusively determine the causes and impacts of global climate change.
3. Scientific research to document the continuous improvement and beneficial impact of agricultural efforts to date with regard to increasing climate resiliency, improving water quality and soil health, sequestering carbon in the soil, and preventing soil erosion.
4. A campaign to communicate to the general public and policy makers about the continuous improvement and beneficial impact of agricultural efforts to date with regard to increasing climate resiliency, improving water quality and soil health, sequestering carbon in the soil, and prevent soil erosion.
5. Expanding and improving state and federal conservation programs that allow farmers to voluntarily adopt conservation practices that increase climate resiliency, improve water quality and soil health, sequester more carbon in the soil, and prevent soil erosion.
6. Market-based solutions that establish economic incentives for farmers to voluntarily adopt conservation practices that increase climate resilience, improve water quality and soil health, sequester more carbon in the soil, and prevent soil erosion. Market-based solutions should:
    - A. Provide open, transparent, and consistent measurement, certification, and verification for carbon sequestration.
    - B. Provide price transparency to market participants.
    - C. Recognize the true cost to adopt practices.
    - D. Recognize that the effects of weather are beyond the farmer's control.
    - E. Address data collection:
        1) Limit data collection to only participating acres.
        2) Limit the contract length and data use to five (5) years.
        3) Establish standard provisions for data retention, ownership, security, and privacy.
    - F. Reserve any compensation from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs as a result of the practice to the farmer.
    - G. Include:
        1) Practices previously adopted.
        2) Ecosystems credit remaining with the farmer unless otherwise designated in the farmland lease.
        3) A collaboration between government, purchasers, aggregators, and farmers to define parameters of carbon and sustainability contracts.
7. Illinois Farm Bureau providing education programs for farmers and farmland owners with negotiating carbon and sustainability contract language to provide fair and equitable compensation, adequate legal protections and limit liability.
8. Increased funding for research of farming practices that mitigate climate change while maintaining farm profitability, as well as technical assistance and educational efforts that ensure the research outcomes are transferred effectively to farmers.
9. Research into methods of reducing the amounts of CO2, methane, and other greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from agricultural related industries that does not involve transport or storage of these gases beneath agricultural land.
10. Farmers to voluntarily improve on-farm energy efficiency.
11. Improvements to the current electric grid.
12. Use of a broad spectrum of power sources like renewables, biofuels, and nuclear power to help facilitate the market-derived cost of energy.
13. Federal level climate change policy that reflects regional variations.
14. Federal Crop Insurance premium benefits as one method for compensating farmers for implementing conservation practices.

We oppose:

1. Any regulations or treaties relative to global climate change that will unfairly impact U.S. agriculture and the U.S. economy.
2. Penalizing equipment like semi-trucks or farm machinery for consuming fossil fuels.
3. Penalizing animal agriculture for emissions related to their consumption and digestion of feed.
4. A state-by-state patchwork of climate change policies.

24. HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND

We support:

1. Altering Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) determination and classification to reflect the applied permanent conservation practices (i.e., terraces and diversions) that reduce the soil loss factor on soils that would normally be highly erodible. If the reduction in soil loss makes the land NON-HEL, the land should be so classified and remain so classified as long as the permanent conservation practices are maintained as designed.
2. Variances in conservation practices for livestock farmers so they can utilize crops or crop residue without jeopardizing conservation compliance regulations. These practices should include, but not be limited to, pasturing livestock, chopping silage, harvesting crop residues, and manure incorporation.
3. Local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel working directly with farmers in coordinating the repair of damage from normal farming practices to fields with an HEL designation. The NRCS should consider field condition limitations before imposing penalties for non-compliance.

25. MINED LANDS

We support:

1. Working with private, county, state, and federal groups and agencies in the development and strict enforcement of regulations for mined and undermined lands which will give proper consideration to needs and priorities of agriculture as well as energy and which will protect and restore agricultural lands.
2. Working with other interested groups in developing reasonable solutions to problems of subsidence and means to minimize subsidence in future mining operations. The landowner shall receive fair compensation for any subsidence which occurs.
3. The Office of Mines and Minerals including irrigation and other agricultural wells in the protection clauses under Illinois regulations concerning subsidence from underground mines.
4. A bonding requirement for coal companies that receive fly ash from coal combustion plants to address groundwater concerns and cleanup.
5. Developing an educational program on mineral and subsidence rights for landowners.
6. Mining methods that maintain property values.
7. The review of the impact of mining activity and how it affects the market value of property. Should this effect be negative, we will seek legislation to compensate landowners for this loss.
8. Requiring mine operators to compensate landowners and tenants for production losses.
9. Requiring mine operators to compensate landowners and tenants for increased cost of federal crop insurance when the farmland has been rerated due to mining operations.
10. County Farm Bureaus becoming involved in reviewing proposed reclamation plans prior to the issuance of mining permits and to closely monitor such reclamation plans after mining to see they are being properly implemented.

26. MINERAL INTERESTS

We support:

1. A requirement that data from core tests of coal and fluorspar exploration be made available to the public after one year in the same manner that data on oil and gas wells are made available to the public.
2. Legislation to require the owners of oil and gas interests that have been severed from the existing surface ownership to provide to the surface owner:
   - A. A 30-day notice before entry is made onto the surface for oil and gas exploration and recovery.
   - B. Compliance with minimum reclamation standards to minimize surface impacts of such operation and full clean-up of oil and gas sites.
   - C. Complete compensation payable to the surface owner or tenant for damages incurred during such operation and annual production losses incurred by the presence of roads, tank batteries, well heads, and oil and gas production equipment.
   - D. Complete compensation for the loss in land value due to drilling operations.
3. Legislation requiring the operator of an oil and gas well to bury all electrical lines to a depth not less than 36 inches from the surface unless otherwise agreed to by the landowner.
4. Continued efforts to strengthen and clarify existing rules and regulations relating to oil and gas well site reclamation, well capping and well waste disposal, and to inform members of those regulations.
5. Establishing regulations for hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling on site preparation, drilling, well-casings, pipelines, waste-storage, and other appropriate safeguards in order to protect land and water resources.
6. Legislation requiring all new underground flow lines constructed as part of a high-volume horizontal fracturing well site, production facility, or any oil or gas drilling operation which crosses agricultural land, shall be buried following the contour of the surface with a minimum of 60 inches of topcover.
7. Legislation which requires an operator of an oil or gas well to post and maintain a performance bond to protect the surface owner in the event that the operator abandons drilling, fails to plug the well(s) or restore the surface; or fails to provide complete compensation to the landowner for damage.
8. Legislation requiring individuals or companies seeking to acquire oil and gas mineral interests from landowners to provide the landowner a written summary of the landowner's legal and property rights relating to the actual exploration and production of oil and gas prior to any negotiation for the lease or purchase of such mineral interests.
9. Efforts by government agencies or private sector to address salt water contamination from abandoned oil wells.
10. A dedicated fund to address environmental problems related to abandoned oil and gas wells. Consideration should be given to additional funding for these activities.
11. Efforts by government agencies or the private sector to create and maintain an accurate and current listing of mineral rights owners for each tract of ground.
12. Legislation that would revert ownership interests of coal, oil, gas, and all other minerals (if unclaimed, unused, or dormant for a period of up to 20 years) back to the surface estate owner.
13. Landowners and owners of rural property being justly compensated by coalbed methane operators when landowner’s property is being drilled upon in the absence of an agreement with the landowner.
14. Legislation that would revert ownership rights of utility, pipeline, and underground gas storage easements or leases back to the surface owner if unused, abandoned, or dormant for a period of 20 years.
15. Efforts by the Illinois County Assessment Officers Association to require oil and gas operators and first purchasers of oil and gas to report well production with accuracy to county assessing officials within a workable timeframe each year or be subject to a fine for

failure to report. This would include each county assessing official, where oil and gas production occurs, receiving an annual free copy of all pipeline reports.

16. Penalties being issued for violations with oil wells.
17. Plugging of oil wells on land where they are non-producing.

We oppose:

1. The transfer or production of mineral rights or related rights (including subsidence rights) by any public body without first offering those rights back to the current owner of the surface estate.
2. Any moratorium on horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing in Illinois.

27. ORGANIC NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Manure is a plant nutrient material. It is a valuable resource and, when combined with bedding material, a residue source.

We believe:

1. County Farm Bureaus should develop a better understanding among farmers and the public of issues concerning organic nutrient management.
2. Ongoing research should be encouraged to determine air quality and odor parameters that provide scientifically-proven levels for livestock health and worker safety.
3. There must be no direct discharge from manure storage systems or livestock facilities to surface waters, drainage ditches, or field tiles due to negligence, poor management, and faulty structural design. Direct discharges due to natural causes should be exempt from civil and punitive penalties and damages.
4. Research on manure management is a high priority including such topics as odor reduction, waste and nutrient management, and artificial wetland remediation of nutrients. Some flexibility should be allowed in wetlands management.
5. Any proposed law, rule, or regulation which would restrict a farmer's nutrient management plan shall only be implemented if consistent with Best Management Practices (BMPs) developed at the state level with the cooperation and assistance of our state land grant institutions with considerations given for local conditions.
6. Government agencies must utilize proven scientific practices and cost/benefit analyses when developing policies concerning organic nutrient management facilities and application of manure.
7. Additional government cost-share funding should be made available to farmers for constructing manure handling facilities to correct existing problems.
8. That the development and enforcement of organic nutrient management standards are best handled at the state level but any dialog on national environmental standards or legislation for organic nutrient management must be based on proven science and generally-accepted agricultural BMPs and should comply with the above points. The authority for enforcement and implementation of these standards should be clearly defined to protect farmers from differing interpretations by state or federal agencies.

We support:

1. Programs to educate farmers on techniques regarding properly-managed organic nutrient systems.
2. A public relations program to emphasize methods by which farmers protect the environment by using properly-managed organic nutrient systems.

We oppose requiring livestock operations to obtain permits for application of livestock manure.

28. CROP PROTECTION APPLICATION, EDUCATION, AND RECORDKEEPING

Proper understanding and handling of crop protection products is important to every farmer.

We support:

1. The pesticide applicator certification as a means to assure society that farmers and other licensed applicators are trained and knowledgeable.
2. Encouraging pesticide applicators and farmers to be aware of liabilities for drift and volatilization potential to all crop and non-crop land that is pesticide-sensitive.
3. Encouraging non-agricultural users of pesticides to become better educated on their safe use and potential environmental impacts.
4. Urging the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to review any incorrect Illinois Pesticide Applicators' License exam answers to give applicants the opportunity to become more knowledgeable.
5. Giving individuals the option of either taking training and testing of all license categories online or in the classroom.
6. Amending current private applicator license procedures to create a license that is valid for five years. Any new training requirements added during the term of the license will be considered endorsements to the license. These endorsements should not trigger testing for an overall new license.
7. Federal law that mandates U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to use university data and other credible agricultural industry sources to determine actual pesticide usage levels.
8. Restricted use pesticide recordkeeping that protects the interests and confidentiality of farmers and their records.
9. Making IDOA the lead state agency to implement and administer all pesticide recordkeeping.
10. Increased funding for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to increase credible information on pesticide use collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
11. A change in statute and/or regulations that would allow a custom applicator service to be assigned the responsibility of keeping pesticide application records for landowners and operators.
12. Consideration being given to IDOA pesticide misuse complaint findings, when determining liability for pesticide damage.
13. Continuation and development of research programs through state university agricultural departments that identify the optimum timing for application of herbicides to achieve the greatest weed control, while reducing any potential negative impact to row crop and specialty crop plant development.
14. Farmer participation in the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) registration discussions on products important to Illinois agriculture.
15. State regulatory agencies accounting for the following factors when making changes to pesticide labels:
    A. The economic value of the product being regulated and the economic cost of alternatives.
    B. Geographical and climatic differences throughout the State.
    C. Science based evidence of the need for and results of regulations.
16. Interagency cooperation during the registration process of crop protection tools and traits.
17. Illinois Farm Bureau participation in the State of Illinois Interagency Committee on Pesticides.
18. EPA's policy that allows the expeditious use of existing stocks of pesticide products whose registrations have been amended, canceled, or suspended.
19. Development of new crop protection technologies that benefit specialty growers and row-crop farmers alike, while minimizing the effects on other plant habitat and the environment.
20. The establishment of an industry standard for voluntary field marking that displays the traits planted in a field.

We oppose any pesticide recordkeeping requirements that create additional farmer liability for applying pesticides according to label instructions.

29. REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

We support:

1. Regenerative agriculture referring to improving soil health and function.
2. Regenerative agricultural principles focusing on keeping the soil covered, minimizing soil disturbance, keeping living roots as often as possible, maximizing biodiversity and integrating livestock, within local context.
3. Qualifications for incentives being based on a menu of regenerative agriculture practices rather than a prescriptive list.
4. Policy supporting voluntary adoption of regenerative practices.
5. Education, outreach, and technical assistance around the value and implementation of regenerative practices.

30. RIVER CONSERVANCY DISTRICTS

We support:

1. Legislation requiring petition signatures containing at least 10 percent of the registered voters within a proposed district be secured in order to place the question of creating a new district on the ballot.
2. Legislation providing means for disconnecting lands not benefited from an established district.
3. Legislation requiring wider publication and notice of public hearing.

31. RIVERS, LEVEES AND FLOODPLAINS

Rivers

We support:

1. The ability of Congress to earmark discretionary funds for specific projects in a transparent way that identifies the purpose and intended beneficiaries.
2. Pursuing actions in Congress and appropriate federal and state agencies to ensure that we have an efficient and competitive transportation system through which we can effectively move agricultural and commercial products.
3. Working with other interested groups to improve the lock and dam systems on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. As a part of that effort, we support construction of 1,200-foot locks on the Mississippi River at least at Keokuk and below and on the Illinois River at least at Peoria and below.
4. A Midwestern, multi-state effort to review results of existing river and related studies and identify impacts of associated state and federal regulations. Based on these studies, we will promote a multiple-use strategy for the Upper Mississippi River and its navigable tributaries to serve agriculture, industry, recreation, transportation, and the environment. A comprehensive plan must be fair, clear, and equitable for all counties adjacent to or affected by river flooding. Money appropriated for projects should be used by that project if at all possible.
5. The development of a balanced and comprehensive river management plan by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under the auspices of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC).

6. Encouraging the MRC to use its authority to promote improvements to navigation, economic development, flood control, recreation, and environment within the Upper Mississippi River basin.
7. Seeking representation on the MRC to include at least one member from the Upper Mississippi River area.
8. Encouraging members of Congress to become actively involved in the Mississippi River Congressional Caucus.
9. Efforts to increase the Operations and Maintenance budget to maintain navigation, recreation, and flood control systems.
10. Encouraging the consideration of Public Private Partnerships (P3) as a way to capitalize Corps of Engineers' infrastructure projects.
11. An analysis of the effects of changing the hours of operations of any lock and dam. This analysis should look at the effect on the Corps, local communities, and the businesses who use or are affected by the lock and dam. Public input should be sought.
12. Appropriations for the maintenance and operation of the Kaskaskia River lock and dam.
13. Requiring government agencies to send notification about new streambank initiatives to landowners whose property is adjacent to and may be impacted by those initiatives.

Levees

Illinois has greatly benefited from the construction of flood control levees and their associated systems along its rivers. Many have now exceeded their life expectancy and flooding poses a significant threat to surrounding property.

We believe federal and state government agencies should be committed to assisting with the timely repair and maintenance of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries. After a disaster occurs, repairs should be made in "emergency" mode. We believe adequate funds should be made available to the Corps, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other appropriate agencies to assist in the repair of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries.

The Corps of Engineers should be the lead agency for setting standards used to certify levees as protecting against certain levels of flooding. These standards should include provisions to allow reasonable flexibility in administration of the rules such as:

1. If the capacity of the levee is found deficient, adequate time should be allowed for repairs before decertification.
2. Rules should account for acceptable levels of permeability in sand levees and the capability to bolster levees during flood fights.

We support:

1. Efforts to remove silt from rivers and to promote the use of that material behind the levee for strengthening the levee system.
2. Efforts to secure federal and state funds for constructing certified levees and associated systems on major rivers. To evaluate the appropriateness of that funding, we support the concept of using Risk Informed Decision Framework (RIDF) that would address four evaluation areas: national economic development, environmental quality, regional economic development, and other social effects. The RIDF approach should recognize the potential for future economic development.
3. The use of regional economic development benefit:cost ratios in addition to other considerations in determining support for waterway and flood control projects.
4. Equitable treatment of intangible benefits in calculating the benefits of levee construction projects. We encourage the Corps to fully restore damaged levees to no less than pre-existing conditions in a timely fashion. Those levees that are purposely destroyed by the Corps should be fully restored prior to the next normal high water season.
5. Efforts to allow drainage and levee districts to restore a levee to its highest approved flood frequency design and/or profile without being limited by water level mitigation requirements.

6. A uniform federal floodplain standard (also adopted by the states) allowing a one-foot rise in floodwater height for flood protection projects on major rivers and other bodies of water bordering two or more adjoining states.
7. Streamlining the process of permitting the repair and/or construction of levees and other flood control devices while maintaining the strict adherence to that section within the Illinois Rivers, Lakes and Streams Act that requires permitting prior to repair and/or construction.
8. Using hydrology studies and other pertinent information developed within the Comprehensive Plan to expedite the permitting process for flood control projects within the scope of the plan. A timeline should be developed to establish target beginning and completion dates for each project within the Comprehensive Plan to help move those projects along in a more efficient and timely manner.
9. Legislation that provides the Corps the authority and funding to develop and construct streambank and shoreline protection projects to prevent erosion damages to infrastructure.
10. Adoption of Base Flood Elevation impact mitigation standards for construction within the floodway in Illinois similar to those in Iowa or Missouri so that the same level of activity can occur on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River as does in those adjoining states.
11. The Corps' Comprehensive Plan with the following conditions:
    A. The Plan must include reconstruction of existing levees and ancillary flood reduction system components to ensure they function at their approved design capacity.
    B. Existing levees within the reach of the Plan that are of sufficient height but lack other necessary features (such as seepage wells and proper slope) should be allowed to be improved to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certifiable 100-year flood frequency protection.
    C. The Len Small Levee and Drainage District should be incorporated as part of the Plan. It should enjoy the same right to pursue improvement and rehabilitation as is afforded other levee districts not eligible for 500-year flood frequency protection.
    D. All acres currently protected by levees should maintain at least their current level of protection.
12. Federal funding for improvement to levees to maintain the existing level of flood frequency protection when induced increases in floodwaters occur due to the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for Flood Control.
13. Urging the Corps to adopt water flow management policies that avoid the flooding of farmland situated below any reservoir, dam, or behind any levee system managed or controlled by the Corps.
14. Urging state and federal agencies to provide timely assistance to local levees during a crisis.
15. Eliminating the duplication of levee inspections with resulting cost savings to be used for levee improvements.

Floodplains

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) should be designed to provide insurance, not regulate land use. It should not be designed to revert the floodplain to its (historic, former) undeveloped state. Furthermore, rules and regulations regarding floodplain management should not supersede private property rights.

Agriculture in a floodplain should be given recognition as providing positive benefits to the environment and the public good. These intangible benefits should receive the same consideration in benefit: cost analysis as do other environmental benefits.

A one-size-fits-all approach to floodplain regulations does not accommodate the unique physical differences among floodplains. Regulations, including NFIP, should recognize those differences, which range from the expansive floodplains of major rivers to narrow riverines to non-riverine depressions.

We will seek revisions in FEMA regulations to:

1. Fund and allow the Army Corps of Engineers to coordinate all flood fighting efforts.
2. Increase efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation of FEMA and other government agencies in order to streamline the process to deliver emergency assistance in a timely manner during a disaster and the disaster recovery process.
3. Allow the limited issuance of certain construction permits by units of local government where the applicant has assumed all risk for flood damage to the structure without jeopardizing the receipt of NFIP funds and other federal monies for those who wish to participate in federal insurance, disaster, and loan programs.
4. Provide NFIP and disaster payment eligibility for production agriculture facilities and farm residences protected by a levee, including levees that provide protection from less than 100-year floods. The insurance offered for such structures should be at a rate which reflects the degree of protection provided by the levee.
5. Allow structures located in a floodplain that are “substantially damaged” by means other than a flood to be rebuilt without regard to NFIP regulations and to maintain flood insurance eligibility.

We support:

1. Amendments to federal regulations and policy that would require dewatering of agricultural land as part of flood recovery efforts.
2. FEMA interim guidelines for wet flood-proofing of agricultural structures and efforts to make them permanent.
3. Allowing the replacement construction costs of a structure to be used instead of market value to measure the damage to a structure for purposes of determining whether “substantial damage” has been done.
4. Revising NFIP regulations to allow counties and municipalities, at the local unit’s discretion, to sell to private owners those properties bought out by FEMA. In such cases, the property should include an easement restricting surface development rights but allowing normal agricultural practices.
5. Continuation of NFIP exemption of property behind properly designed, built, and maintained 100-year certified levees, dams, and other flood control infrastructure.
6. Efforts to educate and inform legislators, regulators, media, farmers, environmental leaders, and the public about the economic and societal benefits and issues associated with the agricultural and commercial use of expansive floodplains.
7. Working to preserve statewide permits authorized by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources-Office of Water Resources for certain construction, transportation, and infrastructure maintenance projects in floodplains at no cost to individuals, businesses, or units of government.

If a levee’s flood level protection certification would be lowered due to a revised flow frequency study, structures that existed behind the levee prior to the re-certification should be grandfathered and managed under the NFIP as though the higher flood protection certification still applies. Structures built after the levee’s re-certification should be managed under the rules that apply with the then current certified flood protection level.

32. SOIL CONSERVATION

Soil erosion is a threat to the long-term productivity of agriculture. Farmers and landowners should strive to implement soil conservation practices.

We support:

1. Efforts to maintain local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offices, while improving efficiencies, to provide technological assistance and project certification.

2. Soil conservation programs using education, voluntary compliance, financial incentives and other non-punitive means to encourage compliance. Farmers should not be penalized for a “first offense” failure to meet residue requirements if they have made a good faith effort to follow their conservation plan, or for failure to obtain mandated residue cover following crop failure. Any penalties for subsequent violations should not exceed the farm program benefits on the tract number in violation. The provision of cost sharing by government agencies must be a prerequisite to any compliance program.
3. Increasing funding and technical support for various state and federal programs to assist farmers, landowners, and drainage districts in controlling erosion and runoff, including streambank stabilization. Available resources should be targeted to those areas where greatest problems exist and programs are being implemented.
4. Using available funding sources, such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program or Illinois EPA Section 319 grants, to support SWCD efforts.
5. Inclusion of conservation practices that address soil erosion, sediment control, and water quality concerns brought on by community development in the Natural Resources Conservation Services’ (NRCS) National Handbook of Conservation Practices.
6. Unrestricted technical and educational services of NRCS to municipalities, other local governments, and non-governmental entities within funding parameters.
7. Legislation that would protect landowners from liability resulting from the malfunction of terraces and structures constructed according to NRCS guidelines.
8. Amendment of the election process currently used by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to allow SWCD directors to be elected with the stipulation that the election be structured so that no more than one director may be elected from any township in any election.
9. Maintaining county SWCDs under the administration of the Illinois Department of Agriculture and funding for SWCD staff at compensation levels comparable to that of state employees.
10. Research on the concept of economic benefits of green payments to farmers.
11. Concepts would include guaranteeing farmers a payment for implementing new conservation practices. This could be initiated through a public/private partnership program.
12. Including funding for technical assistance in the overall costs to implement government programs addressing natural resource or environmental issues.
13. Adequate state and federal funding for updating soil surveys.
14. Amending the Prevailing Wage Act so it does not apply to state funded conservation incentive payments.
15. Public/private partnerships to provide consumer education programs on conservation practices.
16. Encouraging local governments and developers to utilize all practical means to control non- farm soil erosion.

We oppose the use of state or federal conservation funds for conservation practices on land that is in the process of being developed. The SWCD and/or the NRCS shall require monies to be returned if land is converted to non-production agriculture use in ten years or less after receipt of state or federal funds. This may include land that has been platted or sold to a developer.

33. VOLUNTARY ECOSYSTEM PRESERVATION

We believe there is an opportunity to preserve in a natural condition at least a portion of Illinois ecosystems. We are willing to work with others to accomplish this goal.

A preservation habitat program should:
1. Be voluntary.
2. Provide the ability for the landowner to terminate the agreement.

3. Not use eminent domain.
4. Not rely on property taxes.
5. Have no negative impact on adjoining property owners.

Furthermore, drainage must be maintained through wildlife refuges and conservation areas to keep ditches, rivers, and other drainage conveyances free of sand, silt, and vegetation so that neighboring lands are not ill affected by the reduction of water capacities.

34. WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED PROJECTS

We support:

1. Sound scientific peer-reviewed data being used as the basis for treatment of non-point sources under the Clean Water Act or other similar water quality laws at the federal or state level.
2. Funding research on best management practices (BMPs) of agricultural crop production products.
3. The involvement of agriculture, including county Farm Bureaus and drainage districts, in watershed group planning efforts.
4. Increased funding for comprehensive watershed planning and voluntary, incentive-based implementation of BMPs as a result of the planning.
5. Programs to educate farmers and the general public of the need to protect and/or improve water quality and the various BMPs to accomplish those goals.
6. Voluntary programs between the state or municipalities with farmers to solve issues with water quality and/or nutrient management.
7. Farmer adoption of the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS) through voluntary implementation of BMPs.
8. The development of new and the enhancement of existing incentives for adopting voluntary BMPs on all private land to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.
9. Policies made regarding the Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone to be backed by reliable, broad-based, scientific research. We should unite with other like-minded stakeholders to form a coalition on the issue to:
    A. Coordinate a plan of action.
    B. Communicate with each other, the general public, elected officials, and members regarding the hypoxia area.
    C. Evaluate current research data and encourage further research on the hypoxic area and issues related to it.
    D. Use all means at our disposal to address the issue in a way that gives proper consideration to the impact it has on agricultural production.
10. A portion of water consumption fees collected from any user of water from a drinking water supply lake be used for payments to landowners and tenants who adopt conservation practices within the watershed of the lake.
11. The use of science-based conservation evaluation tools to assist in the implementation of voluntary conservation practices and programs.

We oppose:

1. Using mandatory methods to address agricultural, non-point source issues related to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of pollutants in streams.
2. Any increased regulation on tile drainage from farm fields, including designating water flow from farm fields through or over conveyances, such as drain tile or grass waterways, as a point source of pollution under the Clean Water Act.
3. Fines, assessments, and penalties on non-point source pollutions allegedly caused by agriculture but not confirmed by sound scientific peer-reviewed data.
4. Water management programs that restrict the ability of landowners to provide effective drainage and flood control in rural and urban areas.

35. WATER WITHDRAWALS

We believe that the ability of a landowner to reasonably use water on or beneath his property is a right to be enjoyed. This right should not be taken without due process of law. Just compensation should be given to those regions or individuals whose ability to use the water is diminished.

We believe agricultural uses must receive a high priority in the allocation of water supplies. Consideration should be given to businesses or consumers which would feel an economic impact from water restrictions.

We believe it is the duty of all users to conserve water to avoid waste of a critical natural resource. Conservation programs should encourage use of water recycling where feasible. Industry should be encouraged to use recycled effluent water produced by local municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the production process.

We support:

1. The establishment of water authorities by referendum of affected property owners, for the purpose of managing the water resource. Water authorities should be established within aquifers or recharge lines and be governed by elected or appointed directors who are resident landowners representing the various water users in the district. Regulations, developed by authorities, should be based upon the availability of supply and needs and desires of affected property owners.
2. Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) should receive support to implement provisions of the Water Use Act to collect necessary data on water wells.
3. Water withdrawal regulations recognizing the responsibility of all users to construct and maintain proper wells. Illinois Department of Public Health regulations provide the guidelines for well construction and should be based on facts and research data collected from scientifically valid groundwater studies.
4. Continuing research on groundwater availability, recharge and the efficient use of water resources. Such research should be designed to develop a conservation program with emphasis on individual, local and state participation.
5. Local, state, and federal appropriations to bring about groundwater research and technical assistance from state agencies to assist local water planning and management efforts.
6. The Illinois State Water Survey monitoring groundwater movement in aquifers to determine where water shortages may potentially arise.
7. Requiring proposed data centers to file a water withdrawal plan as part of a special use permit application where required or with the county prior to construction and operation. Illinois State Water Survey would review potential impacts and report to the county where the project is proposed.

We oppose the granting of eminent domain authority for water resource exploration.

36. WEED CONTROL

We support:

1. Seeking to improve the enforcement of the Illinois Noxious Weed Law.
2. Efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to restrict the importation and sale of viable Niger Thistle seed.
3. Providing information to counties on the process by which weeds can be classified as noxious.
4. Seeking to improve the purity of crop and bird seed and sterilization of all weed seed included in bird seed to deter the spread of viable weed seed.
5. Working with the Farm Service Agency and other governmental agencies in developing an effective eradication program for multiflora rose.

6. The development of a control program for autumn olive and bush honeysuckle, and seek the necessary funds from the state and federal government to adequately eradicate the weed.
7. Legislation to require all governmental agencies to develop, coordinate, and implement proper management practices to control the population and spread of noxious and other weeds on all their properties.
8. Working to add Shattercane, Bull Thistle, Tall Thistle,Teasel and Poison Hemlock to the Illinois Noxious Weed List.
9. Encouraging the IDOA to notify the county boards whenever there is a change to the Illinois Noxious Weed Law and/or rules.
10. USDA requiring that seed for program acres be free of pesticide resistant weed seed such as Palmer Amaranth.

37. WETLANDS

We recognize that while our country has had a history of programs encouraging the conversion of wetlands to uses considered more productive, public opinion now sees significant benefits in protecting wetlands. We agree wetlands provide certain benefits and support reasonable efforts to discourage their conversion. However, this should not mean that in all instances wetland conversion is unnecessary or that private landowners should solely bear the cost of protecting wetlands. Any effort to protect wetlands should recognize the rights of private property owners and drainage districts.

We support:

1. A definition that requires all three benchmarks of hydric soil, hydrophytic vegetation, and standing water during a predominance of the growing season, supported by a minimum of three consecutive years of sampling data, before a wetland designation is made. Any definition should be subject to public review and legislative approval.
2. Scientific soil vegetation sampling on all lands that are to be designated a wetland. Data should be made available to the landowner and be maintained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as long as that parcel continues to be designated a wetland.
3. An equitable wetland designation appeals process for landowners.
4. A mapping program, as a prerequisite to regulation, which:
    A. Accurately identifies land which has a predominance of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation and standing water.
    B. Has been subject to the review of locally affected landowners and operators.
    C. Has a standard interpretation from the state NRCS office which ensures equality across county lines.
5. The exemption from regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Swampbuster of prior converted cropland and any land that has been cropped in at least six of the last ten years.
6. Compensation to property owners when their ability to make management decisions as to the best economic use of their property is restricted by laws or regulations aimed at protecting wetlands.
7. The ability for private wetland landowners to be able to mitigate wetland conversion on an acre-for-acre or value-for-value basis.
8. Compensation to local units of government which lose tax revenue due to governmental development or acquisition of wetland areas.
9. Education programs which seek to inform landowners of the benefits of wetlands and to urge voluntary conservation of wetland areas.
10. State regulatory control of wetlands programs if they are administered through the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). State regulations should be no more restrictive than federal regulations.

11. The ability to maintain existing drainage structures and tile lines without prior permits or permission.
12. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) NRCS being responsible for identification and regulations of all wetlands.

We oppose the delineation of these areas as linear wetlands:
1. Man-made drainage ditches.
2. Fence lines.
3. Either existing waterways or land previously used for natural drainage.

38. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

We believe agriculture maintains a vital role in ensuring a safe food supply for future generations. The role of farmers in this system is to be responsible managers of the land and the business operations. In order to achieve these goals, effective wildlife management is essential.

The following basic principles are key to effectively implementing wildlife management:
1. Programs that strengthen a landowner's and operator's ability to control wildlife that cause damage on property they own or operate.
2. Educational and informational programs for landowners and operators that promote wildlife management and provide additional income opportunities.

Hunting and Trapping

We support:
1. Quality wildlife management based on economic, biological, and sociological practices.
2. Hunting and trapping because we recognize their vital role in wildlife management, their economic benefit to the state and its citizens, and that they are a legitimate form of recreation that provides positive influences in our society.
3. Streamlining the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) licensing and permitting process to make it more efficient and beneficial for the landowner.
4. Programs to control wildlife populations on public lands and in urban areas, including agricultural land within urban areas, where problems exist.
5. Expanded access, with the landowner's permission, to public and private lands to allow more hunting opportunities.
6. Efforts to extend all firearm, muzzle loading, and late winter antlerless-only deer seasons.
7. The IDNR issuing combination permits consisting of one antlered and two antlerless deer and bonus doe-only permits to hunters to control over-population of deer and reduce health and safety concerns.
8. Encouraging the IDNR to pursue enterprising methods, such as youth or handicap hunts, to control wildlife in areas where problems exist.
9. The opportunity for agricultural landowner participation in the initial decision-making process to release wildlife that would have potential impact on agriculture. We also support the requirement for public notification and public hearings in the proposed release area 90 days prior to the final decision concerning this wildlife release. Landowners should have the right to stop a release on their property.
10. Encouraging IDNR to allow landowners/tenants to purchase additional firearm deer and turkey permits without having to surrender their landowner/tenant free permits.
11. Encouraging the IDNR to allow the harvest of both hens and toms during any turkey season in those counties where population control is necessary.
12. The establishment of an additional fall firearm season for hen-only after the regulation turkey season is complete in those counties where population control is necessary.
13. Legislation or administrative rule to allow landowners to assign free landowner/tenant permits for deer or turkey to family members outside of the household.
14. The IDNR providing landowner’s extra free doe permits for firearm and archery seasons.

15. Legislation requiring the IDNR to amend the permitting process allowing for fair, non-preferential access and earlier permit acquisition (February or March) at reasonable fees to non-resident hunters. We also support requiring the IDNR to eliminate the cap on non-resident archery permits and to issue all permits allowed by law. We will aggressively pursue legislation to eliminate the cap on non-resident archery permits.
16. Programs that encourage and educate youth on hunting and retain hunters in order to enhance the economic viability of agriculture.
17. Eliminating the law requiring landowner(s) and immediate family members to purchase habitat stamps to hunt on property they own or operate.
18. Legislation to allow individual members of farm partnerships and non-resident landowners to obtain free landowner deer and turkey permits.
19. The ability of landowners to obtain a muzzleloader permit without going through the lottery system.
20. An increase in the number of resident and non-resident firearm permits issued in each county.
21. An increase in bag limits for the turkey season and also support an extension of the paid permit season.
22. A year-round season for Illinois residents to hunt, trap, or dispatch resident Canada geese.
23. The removal of resident geese from protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916.
24. Assisting the University of Illinois Extension to develop a basic fee hunting lease agreement.
25. Requiring that deer and turkey hunting permits be issued without charge to the lineal descendants of an Illinois resident who owns at least 40 acres of Illinois land, provided that the lineal descendants hunt only upon that landowner's land.
26. The late winter antlerless-only deer season shall be open in those counties with a firearm or muzzleloader season.
27. Amending the rules for issuance of firearm deer and turkey hunting permits to allow landowners/tenants the ability to buy a hunting permit and be eligible for the first drawing of hunting permits.
28. The ability of landowners to lease their land for hunting. Landowners should not be required to have a minimum number of acres or be required to become an outfitter.
29. Continue to work with IDNR and others to monitor and fine tune the definition of outfitters, the registration program, and the guidelines for outfitters.
30. The creation of an improved method by IDNR to track overpopulation of wildlife.
31. IDNR extending late doe/deer hunting season through February. Harvested meat during this time should be encouraged to be donated to local food pantries.
32. Raccoons, groundhogs, and beavers to be classified alongside coyotes and striped skunks, making them available to dispatch year-round.

Nuisance Programs

We support:

1. A wildlife nuisance permit program that embodies three elements to control nuisance animals causing damage to crops and property. Those elements are:
   A. Harvest time and management flexibility.
   B. Transferability of permits.
   C. Sufficient permits to reduce property damage.
2. Assisting members in utilizing the law which provides for an IDNR permit to control wildlife where it is causing damage to crops or property.
3. The American Farm Bureau Federation in seeking landowner authority to control federally regulated wildlife that is creating a nuisance.
4. Year-round usage of IDNR issued nuisance permits.

Assistance/Incentives for Landowners

We support:

1. Assistance for landowners and operators in implementing management practices that enhance wildlife populations conducive to the economic well-being of landowners and operators. We support legislation or administrative rule changes, including those that govern controls in urban/adjacent agricultural areas, in order to achieve these goals.
2. Incentive programs to enhance wildlife habitat, especially on environmentally-sensitive areas.
3. Efforts to compensate landowners and operators for damage to agricultural crops, property, and livestock arising from wildlife especially on private property near areas managed by IDNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and acknowledgement by IDNR as well as FWS in the vital role of farm owners and operators in the feeding of the various forms of wildlife present on lands under our control. This should include compensation to owners/operators for the value added to wildlife community present on our lands.
4. Providing incentives to hunters through the Sportsmen for Hunger program and various other means to help manage the doe population.
5. Serving as a source of information for landowners on how they can benefit from voluntary, fee-based programs for recreational activities on their land, how landowners can participate in these voluntary programs, what programs (such as Access Illinois Outdoors) currently exist, and further investigate other possibilities.

Trespassing

We support:

1. Efforts to protect rights of farmers and farm owners with problems of trespassing or unauthorized entry by individuals and to require potential users to ask for written permission from landowners or tenants before using the land.
2. Legislation that would make trespassing, when associated with deer driving, a class C misdemeanor.

We oppose the release of elk in Illinois.

39. EMINENT DOMAIN

We will seek legislation providing:

1. That a public hearing be held before any land could be optioned or purchased by a public body for any purpose.
2. That property owners' rights should be fully explained at the hearing.
3. That at least 60 days prior to the hearing, the public body proposing the acquisition send written notice of its intentions to property owners whose land would be taken or damaged.
4. For a cause of action and standing for nearby landowners in court cases involving eminent domain. This should allow landowners in the impacted area the opportunity to seek monetary damages when their property values are adversely affected by such acquisitions.
5. The elimination of eminent domain being used to acquire property for recreational uses.

We support:

1. Legislation to restrict the use of eminent domain to acquire property for wetlands mitigation, buffer zones, water diversion, or retention as part of a river flood management plan.
2. Restricting the use of eminent domain for the installation of pipelines and other utilities.
3. Legislation in which fair market value compensation of private property taken as a part of an eminent domain proceeding receives an exemption from capital gains taxes.

We oppose:

1. The granting of quick-take powers to economic development authorities.
2. The use of eminent domain to acquire properties intended for future sale.
3. The use of eminent domain in the taking of private property for the purpose of economic development by private parties.
4. The use of eminent domain for the purposes of economic development when the project in question has not received approval for construction.

40. FARMLAND OWNERSHIP

The type of domestic ownership of farmland, farm facilities, or farm commodities should not infringe on the economic opportunities of the individual farmer.

We support:

1. Insisting that all foreign investors be required to conform to all local, state, and federal tax laws.
2. Continuing to monitor the effect of foreign investment in agriculture, food distribution, banking, insurance and other businesses in the United States.
3. The continuation of programs to require the reporting of foreign ownership of farmland in the United States.
4. State and national programs and policies which encourage and facilitate the ownership of farmland by farmers and those directly involved with the practice of farming.
5. Continuing to monitor the effects of the entry of non-agricultural entities into farming or farm ownership.
6. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Government Accountability Office analyzing and reporting on foreign influence in the U.S. agricultural industry.
7. Allowing the leasing and renting rather than purchase of U.S. farm ground to foreign agriculture companies for purposes of research.
8. The domestic ownership of agricultural land, water, and mineral rights.

We oppose:

1. The preferential tax treatment of foreign investments in agricultural land under federal tax law or treaty provisions.
2. The purchase of American farmland by all foreign entities.

41. GOVERNMENTAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND OWNERSHIP

We support legislation:

1. Preventing any involuntary net loss of private property ownership in any state. All future forced acquisition or sanctioning of property by federal, state, or local government agencies except by universities for agricultural research must be balanced by disbursement or sales of property of equivalent value from government inventories within the state.
2. To prohibit additional purchases of real estate for recreational or preservation purposes by any level of government unless the property remains on local tax rolls at the prevailing tax rates and prevailing assessed value of similar local properties.
3. Providing for a method of compensating units of local government by the state or federal government where the amount of land taken by the state or federal government severely reduces property tax revenues or where the demand for local services related to the state or federal-owned or managed property is substantially increased.
4. Requiring governmental units maintaining highways, parks or other areas which increase road use or require added police or fire protection or other emergency services to

compensate the appropriate local bodies maintaining those roads or providing such services.

5. Providing for a hearing and a referendum of registered voters in the county or counties in which land is sought by a local governmental unit for recreational, forest or conservation purposes. Existing public lands should be developed for the purpose for which it was purchased before additional property is acquired.
6. Providing that agricultural land owned by local governmental units may be rented for agricultural purposes until developed.
7. To ensure that those government-owned lands, which are commercially farmed and produce a cash crop, should not be farmed by government, but instead are leased to farmers with the exception of those used for agricultural research.
8. Requiring the governmental unit to offer land for resale to the previous owner or their heirs at the lower of the original purchase price or current market value if the property acquired by an agency will not be used for the original purpose for which it was acquired or to adjacent landowners if the original landowner or their heirs do not exercise the right to purchase. If the original or adjacent landowner does not exercise the right to purchase within one year of the offer to sell, then the governmental unit should be allowed to sell such property to other interested parties. We support a sunset time limit of ten years for the property to be used as intended or the buy-back provisions go into effect.
9. Providing that on land owned by the State or local taxing authority where benefits from barter or income are received from such land, a portion of this income or exchange will be returned to the county in which the land is located in lieu of taxes.
10. Requiring units of government acquiring railroad right-of-way property (i.e., for trails) to follow the same provisions for fencing and farm crossings as the railroad was required to follow.
11. Requiring public bodies making acquisition of property for public purposes to make financial settlement within 60 days of the date that the purchase price is determined or be required to pay the property owner the prime interest rate plus 2 percent interest per year on the purchase price until final settlement is made.
12. To limit state and federal agencies in their purchase of additional recreational or wildlife habitat until existing sites, other than farmland, are developed and maintained for the purpose for which they were intended.
13. That would require governmental agencies to document the impact on agriculture of any infrastructure projects, show whether that impact is justified, and if so, take all reasonable steps to reduce or eliminate any negative impact.
14. That clearly defines scenic easements, establishes parameters on the use of such easements, and restricts the ability of the government to use federal highway funds to purchase scenic easements.

We oppose:

1. Any effort to establish buffer areas around parks, preserves, or other areas being protected for their environmental or ecological value without just compensation to affected landowners.
2. The formation of any state or federal wildlife refuges, recreational or conservation areas until such time as the boundaries of such projects are clearly defined and the property targeted for acquisition is clearly identified.
3. The creation or expansion of local, state, and federal refuges, recreational or conservation areas when the aggregate acreage of such proposed focus areas account for more than two percent of the county's farmland.
4. The formation of state or national wildlife refuges, recreation, or conservation areas that impede the existing natural and artificial drainage systems of landowners in the watershed.
5. The continued encroachment of federal and state agencies and local governments on agricultural and forest lands.
6. The closing of Illinois State parks and state historic sites since they are valuable assets for the social and economic survival of rural Illinois.

We will work with state and federal agencies to allow the farming of lands acquired under the Open Lands Trust or other federal or state grant programs. Applications for Open Lands Trust funds to be used for wetlands or riparian areas must include a mosquito abatement and management plan. The timetable for development of the land acquired through such grant programs shall be established by the unit of local government but is not to exceed ten years. We encourage public universities to utilize more equitable and risk-sharing adjustable-rate leases rather than a competitive bidding cash rent lease process on university-owned farmland. All lessees of Illinois farmland controlled by public Illinois universities shall be Illinois based farmers.

When evaluating farm lease policies on farmland owned by the University of Illinois and other public universities, the long-term land stewardship commitments, the full potential local effects on rural communities and their economies, and future university relations with possible land donors should be considered in addition to the immediate economic benefits for the universities.

When determining farmland lease policies, the public institutions should consider taking the opportunity to use best management practices on the universities' owned farmland consistent with the information being provided through the University of Illinois Extension Service.

42. HERITAGE AREAS AND CORRIDORS

We oppose heritage areas and corridors, heritage rivers, scenic byways, and any other such federal or state programs that:

1. Have regulatory authority.
2. Have the power of eminent domain.
3. Are involuntary.
4. Are not grassroots, consensus-based programs that actively involve agricultural interests in their creation, development, and execution.
5. Do not provide a means for a private property owner, a county, or other state or municipal authority to opt out of the program.

43. LAND USE AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Municipal Annexation

We support:

1. Legislation requiring notification of landowners by the petitioners via certified mail at least 90 days prior to any formal petition to incorporate their land into a municipality as defined in Illinois Statutes.
2. Legislation that allows only the landowners in a territory being considered for annexation to be allowed to sign and submit a written petition to the corporate authorities.
3. Efforts to reduce the impacts of municipal annexation on agriculture by reducing to 10 acres the size of the parcel that may be forcibly annexed, and/or establishing a fixed minimum period of time during which agricultural practices may continue.

We oppose:

1. Strip and excessive annexation by municipalities.
2. Non-contiguous annexation agreements and the ability of municipalities to apply their ordinances to parcels that have not been annexed.

Whenever the governing body of any municipality has adopted a resolution to annex any unincorporated area of land, such municipality shall, before proceeding, present at a public hearing the following information:

1. A map and description of the area to be annexed.
2. Evidence that such annexation is reasonable and necessary to the proper development of the municipality.
3. Evidence of the ability to furnish normal municipal services to the unincorporated area at the time of annexation.

Farmland Preservation

While protecting the constitutional rights of landowners, we support:

1. Legislation to broaden the legal basis for farmland preservation approaches and efforts to implement and utilize the following farmland preservation tools:
    - A. Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) to be implemented at the state, county, or local levels or in collaborative arrangements between entities.
    - B. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to be supported and implemented at the state, county, or local levels.
    - C. Growth Management Laws including limited annexation rights for municipalities where prime agricultural land is involved and agricultural protection zones based on referendum secured from encroachment of conversion.
    - D. Mitigation standards requiring that conversion of farmland to a non-farm use be considered only if an equal amount of equal quality land is protected by an agricultural conservation easement.
2. Efforts to encourage preservation of appropriate lands for agriculture and open space uses through land use programs which include:
    - A. A policy statement by all counties to:
        1) Preserve Class I and II farmland as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
        2) Conserve Class III and IV farmland.
        3) Protect all classes of farmland from indiscriminate conversion to non-farm use.
    - B. Establishment of a review process with local involvement prior to acquisition of real property by public agencies for public uses.
    - C. Identification of the various classes of farmland in all counties.
    - D. Identification of land in each county appropriate for development because of class, size, or location.
    - E. The concept of agricultural areas as found in the Illinois Agricultural Areas Conservation and Protection Act. We will take a strong leadership role in strengthening the Act to ensure that it becomes an effective farmland preservation tool.
    - F. Reducing the required acres enrolled to create an Ag Area.
3. Requiring consideration of the impact on agriculture and the local tax base and the desires of local voters in proposals to take agricultural lands for any public use.
4. Encouraging counties and municipalities to implement boundary and land use agreements that protect farmland. Boundary agreements should not be used as a tool in lieu of the purchase of development rights.
5. Seeking legislation that limits the term of county/municipal boundary agreements to five years in length and subjects such agreements to public notice and public hearing.
6. Maintaining involvement in reviewing federal, state, and local proposals to convert farmland to non-farm purposes.
7. Monitoring actions by state agencies regarding implementation of the Farmland Protection Act.
8. Working with major urban interests to develop policies and programs which will encourage compact cities and discourage conversion of farmland. We support the concept of cluster development if the remaining property in the original parcel of property will be preserved for agricultural or conservation purposes.

9. Cooperating with other organizations on farmland preservation issues.
10. Encouraging municipalities to explore all possible avenues to redevelop areas within their borders before annexing farmland.
11. The consideration of impacts on farmland in the development of Environmental Impact Statements as being as significant as the impacts to other environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., historical sites, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and publicly owned parks and recreational areas). We will work with state and federal agencies to develop an Environmental Impact Statement methodology that increases the contributory value of farmland to the public good.
12. Legislation authorizing a graduated conversion fee program for agricultural land that is converted to non-agricultural use based on the parcel's Land Evaluation score. The collected fees would support local PACE programs.

We oppose:

1. The use of condemnation by governmental bodies to acquire farmland for farmland preservation.
2. The development of data centers, cryptocurrency mining operations, and similar facilities if they decrease the reliability of the electric grid, increase the cost of electricity to the rural community, or have the potential to deplete aquifers that communities depends on.

The federal government should assist in funding the purchase of agricultural conservation easements for agricultural purposes from willing sellers as a means of preserving farmland without intruding on private property rights. Information about federal, state, local, and private efforts to acquire private property using tax money should be catalogued and publicized through a state-level clearinghouse.

Planning & Zoning

We support:

1. Requiring members of a county zoning Board of Appeals to reside within the area covered by the county zoning ordinance.
2. Making it mandatory that County Boards require zoning Boards of Appeal to read and include the report of the Soil and Water Conservation District concerning all zoning applications in the hearing and in the report on the application which is made to the County Board.
3. Basing the extent of the municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and zoning capability outside its boundaries on the population of the municipality. The smaller the municipality, the smaller its reach of ETJ and authority should be. No ETJ and municipality's zoning authority should extend beyond 1 1/2 miles.
4. Limiting the ETJ and zoning capabilities of a municipality to either a municipality's utility boundary or corporate limits, whichever lies closer to the city core.
5. Removing the veto power of municipalities over proposed agricultural areas within their 1 1/2-mile jurisdiction.
6. Assisting counties and municipalities in considering adoption of zoning.
7. Assisting counties and municipalities in considering the adoption of a comprehensive land use plan.
8. Encouraging zoned counties to design and implement land use and zoning techniques to protect the integrity of agricultural practices including the option of strict agricultural protection zones.
9. Encouraging counties and municipalities to adopt agricultural zoning definitions that allow parcels to be deemed agricultural land if the land includes accessory use buildings only when the principal activity of the operation is for agricultural purposes.
10. Encouraging counties and municipalities to include farm dwellings, dwellings for tenants or full-time hired farm workers, and dwellings or lodging rooms for seasonal workers as accessory buildings when the principal activity of the operation is for agricultural purposes.
11. Establishing reverse setbacks, comparable to those in the Livestock Management Facilities Act, for new rural residences built near established livestock facilities.

12. Ensuring local land use administrators have the resources necessary to properly develop and implement land use plans which accommodate production agriculture and ensure the effective and efficient administration of the plan.
13. Incorporating the use of a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system in evaluating the suitability of land for agriculture/development.
14. Incorporating the principles of the Land Use Evolution and Impact Assessment Model (LEAM) and encourage its use in planning efforts.
15. Developing legislation giving counties protest rights over municipal zoning and planning proposals within the unincorporated area of a county, thus requiring a municipality to have a supermajority vote.
16. Requiring municipalities to have at least one voting representative from the 1 1/2-mile ETJ on their planning commission with the possibility of additional representatives from the ETJ based on the population of the municipality.
17. Maintaining active involvement in county planning and zoning and in the establishment of agricultural areas as tools to guide development and limit farmland conversion.
18. Encouraging the State of Illinois to develop a statewide zoning model that can be used by county boards and municipal corporate authorities in adopting and amending zoning ordinances that accommodate agriculture and agricultural tourism. Such a model should account for current agricultural-related federal and state laws and regulations.
19. The provisions of the Local Legacy Act and the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act and work to secure state funding for them by reallocations within the Department of Commerce and Economic Development.
20. Supporting legislation that would exempt agriculture from zoning imposed by municipalities within the extraterritorial area outside municipal boundaries.
21. Encouraging county Farm Bureaus to develop relationships with local zoning boards to allow an exchange of information on proposed zoning changes that will impact agriculture on the county level.
22. Seeking legislation requiring 30 days advanced written notification of all landowners and governmental entities whose property or district boundary is within 1 1/2 miles of any parcel in an unincorporated area for which a zoning change is proposed or on which a special use permit is sought. If a petition of protest from 20 percent of those landowners or a written notice from that governing board opposing the change or permit is presented, the amendment shall not be passed nor the special permit issued except by the favorable vote of 3/4 of all the members of the county board. Landowners also need to be given 30 days written advance notice of any new or proposed changes to municipal future planning area or land use.
23. Seeking legislation that strengthens the Illinois Counties Code to limit the arranging of “by-right” lots between a proposed rural subdivision and neighboring property owners in a manner intended to extinguish the neighbors’ protest rights.
24. Encouraging townships with planning commissions to have township government approved land use plans or goals with corresponding policies that reflect a consensus of the townships’ residents. These plans, goals, and policies should be used as a basis for recommendations to the county board.

Other

We support:

1. Working with units of local government to enact “Right to Farm” ordinances or resolutions.
2. Efforts to disclose to potential buyers of rural residential property those conditions associated with living in an agricultural or rural area. These efforts should include state legislation linking such notice to the Residential Real Property Disclosure Act.
3. Encouraging county Farm Bureaus to distribute The Code of Country Living to potential new residents of rural areas so that they better understand rural living.
4. Seeking changes in the process of development of Greenway Plans or other related Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) plans.
    A. Where proposed passive or active greenways are targeted, the landowners should have direct input on the creation of the plan.

B. Before their county board votes on a plan, the board should be given sufficient time to study the plan and get input from citizens of the county.
C. If a county board has approved a plan, there should be the option the county can withdraw from the plan in the future.
D. If a plan is developed, it should include provisions to ensure that greenways remain voluntary.

44. LEGAL ADVOCACY

We support a national legal advocacy strategy that actively addresses legal or regulatory actions taken by governments, groups, or third parties that impact our members' private property rights and production agriculture.

45. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

We believe in the sanctity of private property and individual rights as provided by the U.S. Constitution, as the basis of American freedom and progress. Private property should be defined to include all land, timber or other valuable considerations associated with land ownership.

We support:
1. Developing and seeking legislation defining how private property rights are impacted by government regulations and takings. Such legislation should provide for compensation to affected property owners for a total or reasonably measurable partial loss of use of property resulting from governmental regulations and takings including expanded setback requirements.
2. Efforts to assist landowners when the rightful ownership of land is questioned by an organized group outside the control of the state in which the land was originally deeded. This assistance should include legal and financial assistance from the State of Illinois.
3. Allowing landowners to select who does the field tile repairs, at the cost of the utility company or government entity, on their land when private or public projects go through and damage their tile lines.
4. Legislation reforming Illinois law on the partition of property owned by heirs to provide due process protections like the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act.
5. The requirement that an individual must indicate how they are directly impacted by an issue when filing public comments on legislation, regulation, or related rules, to the county, to the State of Illinois, the U.S. Government, and/or their agencies.
6. The protection of personal property rights of neighboring non-participating landowners in projects built on or around farm ground.

We oppose:
1. Any effort to take away or transfer the right of a landowner to grant or deny easements especially on land where easements have previously been given for other purposes.
2. Legislation allowing the public access to private property without the consent of the property owner.

46. AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES

We support:
1. Voluntary participation in cooperative marketing to better serve Illinois Agricultural Association and county Farm Bureau members.

2. Studying and the development of successful marketing programs consistent with good business practices and encourage affiliates to follow these guidelines.
3. Encouraging and assisting cooperatives to expand member information and involvement programs.
4. Encouraging all agricultural cooperatives to have an aggressive revolving stock redemption policy.
5. Evaluating processing or further integration into the marketing of farm products as a means of increasing members' income.
6. Encouraging co-ops to play a larger role in the meat industry by building or acquiring packing house/processing cooperatives.
7. Encouraging cooperatives to resist entry into production agriculture that would directly compete with cooperative farmers.
8. Encouraging farmers, when direct competition in production agriculture is involved, to resolve disputes through their cooperative boards (including discontinuation of enterprises that compete with the individual stockholder). In the event voluntary efforts are unsuccessful to provide resolution to these competitive issues, we will seek avenues to equitably resolve disputes between cooperatives and their shareholders/members when the issue is whether the cooperative is directly competing with any shareholder/member in production agriculture activities. Such avenues may include arbitration or mediation.
    A. The following competition guidelines should be addressed:
        1) Competition could exist between a cooperative and its members if:
            a) A cooperative purchases or rents ground for the sole purpose of producing agricultural commodities.
            b) A cooperative engages in custom farming service.
            c) A cooperative owns livestock or grows out livestock owned by others.
        2) If a cooperative member decides to enter a venture in competition with the cooperative, he/she does not have cause to find fault if the cooperative was already engaged in that activity.
        3) Competitive production activities should not include seed sales, grain trucking, the application of plant health products such as fertilizer, lime and crop protection products (e.g., pesticides).
    B. The following guidelines of remedy should be considered:
        1) Member must make a written request to the cooperative that it cease production activity.
        2) The cooperative shall have a specific period of time to resolve the dispute.
        3) If the dispute cannot be resolved with the cooperative board, the member may seek to be released from the cooperative. Upon release, the member shall receive the retained earnings allocated plus any outstanding stock, patronage or otherwise, which is held by the member seeking release. The only earnings considered are those on the books of the cooperative that are specifically credited to the account of the named member/patron.
        4) The cooperative may refuse services to released members and/or require them to reinvest to obtain future services.
        5) Provisions should be made to allow members to legally waive their rights of redemption and release.
    C. Promoting ongoing personal contact between state and county Farm Bureaus and local cooperatives to raise issues and to resolve problems.
    D. A federated cooperative structure whereby the regional cooperative continues to assist local cooperatives in serving their farmer members.

47. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

We support:

1. The meaningful involvement of food and agriculture stakeholders in priority setting, funding, and accountability for federal and state food and agricultural research, extension, and education programs.
2. Determining the need and financing necessary to provide appropriate incentives for building and maintaining a critical mass of well-trained scientists in the public sector to support and ensure that the U.S. remains the leader in global agricultural production.
3. A national council with an emphasis on food and agricultural research.
4. Research funding efforts for the Illinois Council for Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR).
5. Redesigning the system of research farms and other pilot scale research facilities to assure that new information and technologies generated in public and/or private efforts around the world are rapidly selected for and adapted to Illinois conditions.
6. Awarding some federal special grants on a competitive basis that address high-priority objectives identified by stakeholders and requiring large-scale, well-coordinated efforts by federal and state institutions and agencies working in cooperation with food and agriculture organizations and firms.
7. Annual increases in the federal investment in public food and agriculture research, extension, and education programs to adjust for inflation in costs.
8. Federal investment in research that provides a mix of formula, competitive, and special grants.
9. Continued federal funding for Cooperative State Research, Extension and Education Service (CSREES) programs to support but be limited to the broad scope of research, extension, and education programs that reflect activities in the U.S. food and agriculture sector. Research, extension, and education programs should be tailored to the unique situations of regions, states, and locales.
10. The use of both federal and state funds to support basic, developmental, and adaptive research and technology transfer.
11. Allocation of funds based upon scholarship and quality of science in determining who should receive funds to carry out federal, state, and local research, extension, and education programs.
12. A major personnel building effort in Illinois to restore and improve its public institutional capacity for food and agriculture research, extension, and education.
13. A major capital program in Illinois to provide modern facilities and equipment for its food and agriculture research, extension, and teaching programs.
14. The integration of research, extension, and education programs to ensure an effective and efficient transfer of knowledge and technology to farmers.
15. Funding for the Plant Genome Research Project.
16. Reauthorization of the competitive research facilities program for land grant universities.
17. Maintaining viable, competitive regional agriculture research centers.
18. Securing foreign investment in U.S. agriculture research where foreign countries stand to benefit from the outcomes derived from such research.
19. Programs to educate consumers about the necessity of research and its integral position in the creation of a long-term, competitive, desirable agricultural growth industry.
20. Land grant colleges keeping research facilities in the public sector.
21. An increase of research dollars in the public and private sector dedicated to the development of new domestic uses of agricultural products and commodities.
22. Production research on efficient nutrient uptake, water quality and usage, and improved pest and disease resistance for crops and livestock.
23. An increased role for the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC) in reaching the 25% phosphorus reduction goal stated in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) nutrient reduction strategy. We advocate facilitating this activity by restructuring the NREC research committee to include a representative from the southern region of the Illinois Wheat Association and a farmer producer from the southern

region appointed by Illinois Farm Bureau. This enables input from parties familiar with conditions and opportunities in the priority phosphorus watersheds.

48. AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

We recognize that agricultural tourism serves as an important marketing strategy and also helps to educate the public about where and how food and farm products are grown.

We support:

1. Recognizing agricultural tourism as an economic development tool for rural areas and support public policy that encourages the growth of agricultural tourism.
2. Continuing to build a working relationship between agricultural tourism operations, state agencies, and other associations.
3. Encouraging the development and implementation of a statewide strategic plan for agricultural tourism with industry input and support.
4. Promoting collaborative projects to raise the awareness of the importance of agricultural tourism to the state's economy and expand growth opportunities in agricultural tourism for Illinois farms including maintenance of appropriate existing databases and websites.
5. A law establishing a broader protection for agritourism operators and facilities/grounds.
6. Encouraging the insurance industry to offer insurance policies for agricultural tourism farms that provide farm owners with coverage for nuisance lawsuits, property damage, and liability, including liability for injuries to visitors invited to the farm.
7. An agritourism liability tax credit both federally and in the state of Illinois.

49. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

We will aggressively work to encourage growth and enhancement of the livestock industry in Illinois.

We support:

1. Seeking legislation to preempt anticipatory nuisance claims against owners of proposed livestock facilities or expansions to existing facilities, provided that such facilities are in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and the construction or expansion of the facility has been approved by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) under the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA).
2. Encouraging the IDOA to cease interpretation of cases or specific situations as "inherent in the law" when no documented or otherwise noted explanation can be found in the LMFA (especially with using this language to explain that any expansion leads to the requirement of construction of a storage facility).
3. Encouraging all agencies involved with livestock facilities management jurisdiction to interact and cooperate so as to develop greater consistency, uniformity, and practicality in rules and regulations.
4. The care of livestock through accepted management practices which will provide for better health and safety for the livestock while maintaining acceptable production levels.
5. The research and development of approved alternatives to livestock rendering including incineration, composting systems, and approval burial methods.
6. Encouraging farmer participation and adoption of quality assurance programs.
7. Informing the general public and the food industry concerning livestock handling procedures with complement accepted livestock management practices, and we will be involved in the development of any standards.
8. IDOA being the entity which shall administer the laws and regulations regarding the care of livestock and companion animals.

9. Participating in supply chain coalitions to proactively address issues threatening the future viability of the livestock industry.
10. The use of signage notifying employees that the use of unauthorized audio, photographic, and video devices of any kind are prohibited in the workplace.
11. Offering educational programs on employee-employer relationships and issues to members.
12. Establishing a more aggressive and visible role in monitoring animal activists' activities, such as identifying sources of funding, legislative initiatives, and membership enrollment. We will work with these groups as needed to ensure complete and accurate public statements about animal agriculture.
13. Counter efforts against the livestock industry by continuing to develop a public relations and public information strategy in cooperation with other agricultural interests to provide accurate information to the media concerning animal agriculture.
14. Enforcement of the laws which protect animal production and continue to support criminal penalties for trespassing and damage that disrupts livestock production and/or research facilities.
15. Providing information in conjunction with the county Farm Bureaus to the media and the public about the importance of the livestock industry. Assistance should also be provided to individual farmers to help them to deal with the public relations challenges faced by the livestock industry.
16. Encouraging livestock exhibitors to only use practices based on responsible animal husbandry. Livestock exhibitors should continue to be educated with regard to what constitutes responsible, ethical, and accepted animal welfare practices, as they relate to the competitive exhibition of livestock.
17. Encouraging livestock show officials to enforce the "Code of Ethics" and penalize violators appropriately.
18. Seeking amendments to the Humane Care for Animals Act and the Illinois Administrative Code that limit the authority of approved volunteer animal investigators that are contracted through the county Humane Societies, to companion animals only, and make those investigators primarily responsible to the IDOA.

We oppose federal, state, or local legislation and regulations that are promoted in the name of "humane" treatment in situations where science shows those regulations would, in actual practice, adversely affect the health, longevity, or productivity of livestock and the economic viability of the operation.

50. ANIMAL HEALTH AND IDENTIFICATION

We support:
1. The Illinois State Fairs working with the livestock industry and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to regularly update a public listing of illegal drugs.
2. Illinois State Fairs having a zero tolerance for animals testing positive for illegal drugs.
3. The Illinois State Fair allowing approved compounds to be present in tissue tests provided they exist below tolerance levels established by the Food and Drug Administration at the time of slaughter.
4. The Illinois State Fair allowing for the tissue presence of compounds administered off-label under veterinarian guidance in consultation with Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD) and Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act (AMDUCA) protocols. Withdrawal time prior to slaughter must still be met for these off-label compounds.
5. Changing U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) response plan from a focus on eradicating infected animals to implementing a widely-available vaccination control program.
6. State and federal disease eradication programs for livestock, and research designed to develop and utilize swift and accurate tests to diagnose these diseases.

7. The quarantine of animals from herd and flocks known to be infected with reportable diseases and the destruction of animals which are infected with reportable diseases and the destruction of animals which are infected with zoonoses which may enter the human food chain.
8. USDA assistance for farmers with infected herds and flocks to develop an approved plan to clean up or depopulate their herds and flocks within a reasonable period of time.
9. Federal legislation, regulations, or programs which will:
    A. Encourage greater uniformity and reciprocity among states for the health requirements necessary for interstate transportation of livestock.
    B. Provide, at the state and federal levels, a voluntary management program for Johne's Disease.
    C. Encourage beef, dairy, goat, sheep, and cervid farmers to test their animals for Mycobacterium paratuberculosis, the causative organism for Johne's Disease.
    D. Encourage cooperation between livestock farmers and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in identifying animals from herds originating from nations which have confirmed cases of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).
    E. Prioritize birth records over dentition, if available when USDA is testing for BSE in cattle.
    F. Provide for regionalization by APHIS to modernize animal movement regulations.
    G. Work with stakeholders to develop a process which provides assurance among livestock producers, veterinarians, and packers which will allow for the timely marketing of animals from herds that have been infected with a non-reportable disease, yet are deemed safe to travel, will not spread the disease, and will not negatively impact the food supply.
    H. Allow farmer/owner consumption of fallen stock.
    I. Allow slaughter of injured stock at either a federal inspected packing house or a state inspected local slaughter plant to be used for human consumption.
10. Implementation of an animal disease traceability program that:
    A. Does not create a burdensome cost to livestock farmers.
    B. Encourages uniformity between states.
    C. Can quickly and accurately trace an animal in the event of a disease outbreak.
    D. Initially uses minimal standards for identification and tracking.
    E. Meets the expectations of foreign governments and out customers overseas.
    F. Places a high priority on ensuring the U.S. reputation as a reliable supplier of meat to foreign markets.
    G. Uses low-cost tags and a "bookend" approach (the times an animal enters commerce and harvest) to track an animal's movements and allows for the replacement of lost tags.
    H. Allows for private sector incentives and disincentives for livestock that are uniquely identified.
    I. Requires all exhibition livestock in Illinois to have a unique identification number (appropriate for each species) and premises number before allowing the animal to show.
11. Encouraging the IDOA to appoint a food animal practitioner to the position of the Illinois State Veterinarian.
12. Encouraging USDA's APHIS to make any announcements related to BSE testing after the markets have closed.
13. Encouraging the use of electronic animal health papers with the ability to include actual digital photos of the animal for relevant species.
14. Encouraging producers to take advantage of educational opportunities regarding biological risk management (BRM) and implement these procedures in their operations.

51. APICULTURE

We support and encourage legislation or administrative rules for Illinois beekeepers, regarding the harvesting and marketing of honey, that are no more stringent than those of neighboring states.

We support:

1. Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) being the entity which shall administer the laws and regulations regarding the care of apiculture.
2. Beekeeping inspectors to have an entomology background and/or a master beekeeper certification.
3. Honeybees brought into Illinois should be inspected and accompanied by a health certificate from the state of origin.
4. Honeybees brought into Illinois for pollination or resale which do not have a health certificate provided by the state of origin shall be required to obtain a health certificate from the State of Illinois within 10 days.
5. Commercial operations and those selling queens, nucs, and/or packages, including resellers are required to obtain a health certificate from the state of origin or from an Illinois inspector, unless covered by an annual inspection.
6. Apiaries and commercial beekeepers engaged in pollination and/or the sale of bees, may be granted an annual health inspection certificate by the IDOA Beekeeping Inspector. Such inspection would allow for movement for pollination purposes, and/or the selling of queens, nucs, and/or packages.
7. Annual health certificate to be valid for one year.
8. To ensure continuity of migratory beekeeping across the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approval will be considered as the sole regulator.
9. Honeybees and beekeeping to be officially designated, for pesticidal regulatory purposes only, by the EPA as a “Minor Use Crop” and by statue remain under EPA jurisdiction.
10. New pesticidal approvals for apicultural use be placed under Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Section 18 standards for approval and processed within 24 months. Said approval to remain in place until full approval process is complete.
11. The designation of “in hive” use of selected low risk biopesticides as approved by EPA to be designated as “Minimal Risk Pesticides” for honeybees only. This would apply only to active ingredients that have been determined to be safe and have tolerance level exemptions. Minimal Risk designation would allow for generics from all suppliers who can establish purity levels as required.
12. EPA granting an exemption of personal use for beekeepers of specified generic natural substances (any substance that naturally occurs in a hive, e.g., Formic Acid and Oxalic Acid).
13. Pesticidal claims using feed as the preferred delivery method remaining under EPA guidelines for approvals.

We oppose state beekeeping inspectors selling live honeybees and/or queens to local beekeepers.

52. BIG DATA, E-COMMERCE, PRIVACY, AND OWNERSHIP

We support:

1. Efforts to better educate stakeholders regarding utilizing new technology or equipment that may receive, record and/or transmit data and the opportunities and risks associated with big data and e-commerce.
2. Requiring companies that are collecting, storing, and analyzing data to provide full disclosure of their intended use of the data.
3. Development of an alternative dispute resolution system for internet transactions.

4. Industry discussions regarding development of industry wide protocols including, but not limited to proper disclosure, privacy and use agreements.
5. Encouraging participants in data sharing use agreements to recognize the value associated with data allowing farmers to receive fair compensations.
6. Efforts to educate farmers about the utilization and impacts of Global Positioning Systems/Geographic Information Systems (GPS/GIS).
7. Uniform ownership standards for the collection, use and release of GPS/GIS data and other forms of data so it becomes the private property of the person who paid for it or whose assets are being utilized.
8. Requiring the consent of the farmer for the release of all personal and farm data.
9. Standardization of formats and protocols developed and used by industry for GPS/GIS applications.
10. Efforts to prevent the use of personal and farm data for illegal activities.
11. Research to determine the appropriate role of government in the implementation of GPS/GIS systems.
12. The neutral and fair transfer of legal data between users by internet service providers.

53. BIOSECURITY

We support:

1. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) placing agricultural screening and inspections as a high priority with its Customs and Border Patrol officers.
2. State and federal legislation to establish an indemnity program and contract relief when acts of terrorism result in losses in production and/or marketability of agricultural products.
3. Import and export protocols that prevent the introduction of foreign animal and plant diseases.
4. The concept of looking at animal health issues beyond our own borders and examining them as “North American” issues.
5. Educational programs for farmers that will assist them in the early identification, treatment, and required reporting of animal and plant diseases.
6. The testing and development of crops that are resistant to diseases not currently present in the United States. The research should be conducted in non-sensitive areas so that the spread of diseases would not cause any loss of value to U.S. agricultural production.
7. Continuing to work with state agencies such as the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to establish and implement uniform biosecurity protocol for all personnel to follow that is consistent with scientific biosecurity guidelines.
8. Encouraging livestock producers to voluntarily develop biosecurity protocols for their operations.

54. BIOTECHNOLOGY

We will actively encourage and educate farmers to be good stewards of biotechnology in order to maintain the integrity and image of the U.S. food and grain supply, ensure technology remains effective through regulatory compliance, and preserve opportunities for future biotech products and processes.

We support:

1. Increased efforts through biotechnology to more rapidly develop traits which have recognized consumer benefits in order to:
    A. Increase the marketability of our products.
    B. Enhance the environment.

C. Increase net farm income.
D. Improve product quality.
E. Enhance U.S. agriculture's competitiveness in the world market.
F. Ensure worldwide consumers of stable, ample, safe, and nutritious U.S. products.

2. The coordinated analysis of biotechnology products by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they are approved for domestic use and commercialization.
3. Utilizing science, including unbiased third-party research, on the development and use of biotechnology enhanced products.
4. Ongoing monitoring of the process of biotechnology product research and approval.
5. Increased efforts to educate the public worldwide regarding the safety and benefits of products developed through biotechnology.
6. Maintenance of U.S. export markets by securing foreign regulatory acceptance of biotechnology products, including the following priorities:
   A. Manufacturers of biotechnology enhanced products must assume major responsibility for this acceptance.
   B. Companies offering biotechnology enhanced products for commercialization in the U.S. must first have approval for most major uses and markets, domestic and international.
   C. Companies must provide adequate and accurate information on acceptable markets and market restrictions in writing to farmers prior to purchase of the original input product.
   D. An ongoing, written reporting system should be maintained for informing farmers what markets do not accept or might be adversely affected by currently unapproved varieties.
   E. Responsible production, marketing, and delivery of agricultural products by those growing varieties not approved for all major uses in all major markets.
7. Global commercialization and production of biotechnology-enhanced crops provided that U.S. farmers are not disadvantaged by business practices compared to our foreign competitors and continued monitoring and reporting of biotechnology fees in the U.S. and other countries.
8. Seed tags on packages of agricultural seed stock that clearly indicate the varietal (and genetic) purity of seed contained therein. We will also support legislation which allows farmers to recover all damages in those instances where the seed does not conform to the genetic purity indicated on the seed tag.
9. New or enhanced marketing methods for biotech and non-biotech seeds provided that they do not restrict market options and offer farmers:
   A. Improved cropping options.
   B. More cost-effective inputs.
   C. Better transportation, handling, planting, and yields.
   D. Uniformity in unit size (seed count per unit).
   E. Uniformity in seed size.
10. Efforts to establish specific standards for biotechnology enhanced and non-biotechnology enhanced product certifications.
11. Adequate testing methods for all commercialized crops in order to protect farmers from liability and ensure the integrity of our grain supply, moreover:
   A. Tests should keep pace with the latest technology and product introductions.
   B. Sufficient competition should exist in the testing market to ensure cost-effectiveness.
   C. Tests should be accurate, verifiable, and acceptable to end users.
   D. The first-purchaser should be responsible for testing upon taking delivery.
   E. The cost of testing should be shared along the agri-food chain.
12. Harmonization of international standards for biotech and non-biotech content, testing, adventitious presence, etc. via the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Codex Alimentarius.

13. Strict adherence to contracts and sales agreements covering the production, marketing, and use of biotechnology products.
14. The strict enforcement of 100 percent quarantine for the research, production, and processing of pharmaceutical and industrial crops that are not approved for food and feed use in the United States in order to protect the commercial grain industry and food safety.
15. Full compensation to farmers for market losses due to lack of enforcement of 100 percent quarantine on experimental crops.
16. Biotechnology products that are coming off patent to have:
    A. A product development clause allowing researchers to work with that trait, with proper stewardship restrictions, before the patent expires. This product development clause should allow for continued product development and the seeking of export market approvals, so products can be brought to market as soon as patents expire.
    B. A system to provide timely access to data collected by the patent holder for the biotechnology regulatory process. The patent holder should receive fair compensation for sharing its data.

55. COMMODITY CHECKOFFS

We support:

1. Voluntary checkoffs for market promotion, development and research that are collected only once from individuals, marketing agencies or Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans when forfeited and only if the farmer can have his checkoff refunded.
2. Legislated mandatory checkoffs for market promotion, development, and research if such checkoffs contain provisions calling for:
    A. The program to be voted in or out by the farmers affected;
    B. Control of the program by an independent committee of farmers;
    C. A full refund of monies upon request to farmers until such time as a refund referendum (not a poll) is approved/disapproved by a majority of farmers voting;
    D. The monies to be used only for purposes intended;
    E. The checkoff to apply to all imported products;
    F. Checkoff-funded research grants for end-user products that have royalty or licensing agreements, where feasible, signed with the research institution.
3. Providing information to farmers which supports the need for increased funding of programs designed to expand domestic and foreign markets for commodities and commodity products.
4. The use of technology to increase voting participation.
5. Working with commodity checkoff groups to emphasize value-added benefits to farmers and to focus on higher net returns for farmers.
6. Efforts to revise rules and regulations governing election of directors of commodity checkoff boards.

56. COMMODITY EXCHANGES

We support:

1. The integrity of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group as a pricing mechanism for commodities.
2. Regulation of the commodity futures business by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC).
3. Encouraging the commodity exchanges to have an active and viable agriculture advisory committee that meets on a regular basis.

4. Monitoring expanded trading regulations and encourage Illinois Agricultural Association representation on advisory committees to the Commodity Exchanges.
5. Urging the CFTC to minimize price manipulation and ensure the markets are effective as a price discovery mechanism.
6. Reviewing price-setting mechanisms and make recommendations for the most effective price-discovery systems for identity-preserved grains.
7. Encouraging the CFTC to work with the CME Group to provide accessibility, usability, and affordability of river terminals, and to increase the number of terminals to be used as delivery points to fulfill hedged grain contracts. This should result in a means to force convergence between the cash and futures market at expiration of the contract.
8. Encouraging the CME Group to offer “mini” energy and fertilizer futures contracts to better allow farmers and others to hedge their input costs.

We oppose new or unnecessary fees being imposed on market price information.

57. COMMODITY GROUPS

We support:

1. Working closely with commodity groups operating in the state and encourage county Farm Bureaus to work closely with local representatives of commodity groups.
2. Increased cooperation between commodity groups through the pooling of resources to create and continue a direct concentrated effort to educate consumers on the facts associated with the production of livestock and other agricultural commodities using accepted best management practices.
3. Scheduling and holding a regular meeting or meetings with representatives of commodity groups affiliated or contractually related to Illinois Agricultural Association for purposes of exchanging information and coordinating legislative and regulatory positions and actions.

58. CONTRACT PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

We support:

1. Monitoring the current changes in marketing practices for many farm commodities, which are moving from farmer to buyer without entering the open market but are being produced and marketed by contractual specifications.
2. The representation of agriculture and assistance in the area of contract marketing.
3. The assignment of staff to research contracts being considered and provide education, information, and advice to attorneys representing farmer members about the ramifications of contracts being entered into and ensure that farmers engaging in contract production and marketing are adequately protected.
4. Seeking measures to ensure that adequate price discovery remains in place for all noncontracted farmers.
5. An improved United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity price reporting system based upon required price reporting by first purchasers.
6. Seed and chemical companies to include local elevators in the premium structure, thus making specialty crops available to more farmers.
7. Individual member farmers in their efforts to negotiate fair and equitable production contracts by developing an information clearinghouse and glossary of terms for production contracts.
8. Educating farmers about the risks involved with buyers call provisions and ensuring that these provisions include:
    A. Specific delivery periods with negotiated final delivery date.

B. Payments to seller if delivery period exceeds original contracted delivery period or if buyer “calls” for delivery prior to the contracted delivery period.
C. Pricing ability to and beyond delivery.

9. Working to develop contract language that will limit farmer liability for grain quality or type to the initial point of delivery.
10. Contracting options offered by a processor being transparent and available to all producers marketing through that processor with considerations for volume, delivery, and quality.

59. DAIRY MARKETING

We support:

1. Input from leaders of the dairy industry and jointly search for solutions to dairy problems which are satisfactory to both our organization and the dairy industry. We urge the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) to work constructively on a national dairy policy that can jointly be supported. Such policy should include a program that:
   A. Is market oriented, reflect current marketing conditions, and send the appropriate signals to dairy farmers to cause adjustments in the production of milk components according to market needs. It should allow farmers to look to the marketplace for their long-term economic prosperity.
   B. Enhances net farm income and ensure an adequate supply of milk.
   C. Provides for a worldwide free trade policy.
   D. Continues the present purchase-based price support program.
   E. Maximizes the use of the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP).
   F. Does not include dairy quota-type marketing concepts but are willing to consider a flexible supply management system.
   G. Does not include state or regional dairy compacts.
   H. Supports risk management tools that will protect dairy farmers from catastrophic swings in feed and milk prices.
   I. Encourages development of new products targeted towards the export market.
2. Changes in milk content standards on a national basis under the Pasteurized Milk Ordinances so as not to interfere or obstruct interstate movement of milk.
3. The principle whereby Boards of Directors of dairy cooperatives can vote for their members in milk marketing and state promotion plans. However, each farmer, whether or not a member of a cooperative, should have the right to cast his own ballot in any referendum.
4. The increased use of dairy products by the school lunch program and by the armed forces.
5. Working with the dairy industry to coordinate federal and state inspections to eliminate duplication and to continue to allow the shipment of milk between states.
6. Implementing a performance-based system that would allow for fewer inspections of dairy farmers that are achieving high ratings from the Illinois Department of Public Health.
7. Monitoring the potential for dairy processor closures or losses of markets and work to inform our membership on alternatives for milk marketing.
8. The pasteurization of raw milk for sale to the public. We also recognize there is a segment of consumers that prefer to purchase raw, unpasteurized milk. For those farmers who sell unpasteurized milk to consumers, the following guidelines should be followed:
   A. Sales occur directly from farmers - on the farm - to consumers provided they bring their own containers.
   B. No wholesalers, retailers, grocery stores or third parties be allowed to sell these products.
   C. Farmers receive a raw milk permit from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to produce and sell raw milk, subject to semi-annual inspections.

9. Changes to national requirements to the legal limit of Somatic Cell Count (SCC) in bovine milk to 400,000 cells per milliliter and less.
10. The development of a stable and robust pricing mechanism for Class I milk. This could include: Class I milk price being based on the advanced price of Class III milk, plus the historical differential of manufactured prices between Class III and Class IV on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), based on the higher of the advanced Class III or Class IV skim price or another undescribed or novel pricing method.
11. Federal Milk Market Order (FMMO) reforms to depooling rules in order to include limits on the amount of milk that is depooled.
12. The study and implementation of combining or reducing the number of classes of milk within the FMMOs.

60. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW USES AND NEW MARKETS

We support:

1. Developing innovative uses for and increased consumption of farm commodities and co-products.
2. Developing promotional programs for businesses and restaurants that use U.S.-produced commodities in their daily business and efforts to develop programs which encourage consumption of Illinois-grown farm products.
3. The right of restaurants to market and sell agricultural products and prepared menu choices, without restrictions by local units of government, provided the products are legally produced using best management practices and industry standards.
4. Efforts to develop and procure financing for processing, distribution, storage, and marketing systems for value-added farm commodities with added emphasis on streamlining and expediting the approval process for farmer-owned projects.
5. Efforts to develop new local marketing points for specialty crops.
6. Efforts to expand consumer and wholesale market opportunities within Illinois for poultry processed on the farm, up to USDA/FSIS limits.
7. Cooperation with farmer-invested checkoff groups, organizations, and agencies seeking expanded domestic and export markets, placing special emphasis on value-added products.
8. Increased funding of grants and guaranteed loan programs to foster research and development of farm commodity and livestock value-enhanced initiatives. A majority of those funds should be targeted to enable farmers to form farmer-owned processing cooperatives.
9. Research on existing and proposed identity-preserved processes in order that government entities may lend their credibility to voluntary industry standards for certification of identity-preserved agricultural products.
10. Promoting the use of Illinois-grown produce in Illinois schools and state-funded institutions.
11. An expanding sheep wool, goat hair, and other animal fiber (e.g., angora, mohair, alpaca, llama) industry in Illinois and recognize the need for continued promotion and development of value-added processing and marketing.
12. Development of regional food hubs, a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers.
13. The expansion of online market sales of agricultural and processed food products.
14. Collaborating with retailers to increase availability of Illinois-grown products.
15. Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) advertising directly to Illinois consumers to purchase and consume Illinois-grown products.

61. DIRECT FOOD MARKETING

We support:

1. Farms disclosing whether products will originate from a single farm or multiple farms.
2. Farms utilizing Good Agriculture Practices and abiding by any state or federal statutes regarding food safety to prevent any food safety risk, including contamination.
3. The acceptance of government nutrition programs at Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), farmers markets, and farm stands.
4. Farms operating as a CSA, in the event of any product substitution, notifying shareholders by providing a list of products and the physical address of the originating farm of where the product was grown.
5. Farms maintaining records per applicable law including origin of all products, physical address and contact information to ensure traceability of CSA shares for a period of five years.
6. Standardized statewide regulations governing refrigeration, freezer, and hand washing station requirements for farmers markets and other direct food sales opportunities.
7. Interstate commerce for farmers markets.
8. Programs, grants, and legislation to improve direct-to-consumer market opportunities for specialty growers and livestock producers.

62. EQUINE AGRICULTURE

We support:

1. Relationships with entities that would allow establishment, access, and maintenance for equine trail activities on publicly-owned recreational trails.
2. Simplifying the process allowing volunteers to assist state/federal workers in trail maintenance and camping areas and to accept donations of items to enhance trails and camping areas.
3. Education programs to promote a viable and growing equine industry. Such programs may include: responsible ownership, animal husbandry, regulations affecting the equine industry, and disease awareness.
4. Efforts to provide insurance and liability coverage that is accessible and reasonable for equine owners and participants involved in equine related activities.
5. Seeking legislation allowing equine harvesting in Illinois.
6. Options for end-of-life alternatives for equine including humane harvesting and processing for human consumption, or other uses to produce marketable products, provided all state and federal guidelines are observed.
7. Continued full funding of federal meat inspectors for equine harvesting facilities.
8. The expansion and economic welfare of the horse racing industry.
9. Encouraging equine owners to work with veterinarians in practicing regular equine health standards.
10. Performing an annual Coggins Testing to identify Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA).
11. Administering vaccinations, relevant to travel, and exposure to regional disease and infection.
12. Using a routine schedule and strategy for treating and preventing internal equine parasites.
13. County Farm Bureaus creating and maintaining county and/or multi-county equine committees.
14. Efforts to develop and execute an Illinois equine census.
15. Seeking legislation classifying equine as livestock.

We oppose:

1. Closing existing equestrian trails on federal and state property other than property where irreversible damage could occur.

2. Efforts to terminate, ban, effectively ban, or create an undue financial hardship relating to the use of horses in commerce, service, agriculture, husbandry, transportation, ranching, entertainment, education, or exhibition.

63. FARMER PROTECTION FOR PAYMENT OF GRAIN

We support:

1. The review of civil and criminal penalties to determine if they are adequate and enforced to the full extent of the law.
2. Changes in the U.S. Warehouse Act which would allow any state which has a warehouse law which is more restrictive and more protective than the federal law, to require warehouses operating in the state to comply with the state's provisions rather than the federal statute.
3. The maintenance of the current state powers of licensing of warehouses and grain dealers, and general regulation of the grain industry, as embodied in the Illinois Grain Code, and oppose federal preemption of state authority.
4. Educating farmers of the potential risks involved in selling grain to unlicensed parties and how to better identify licensed grain buying facilities.
5. The concept that farmers who buy more than 100,000 bushels of grain on an annual basis from other farmers for use as seed or feed, and use price-later contracts, must provide a bond to the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to guarantee payment for all purchases of grain, except no bond shall be required in those situations where a tenant purchases, from his landlord, grain produced by the tenant.
6. The requirement of a reminder notification being made by licensee to the farmer no less than 30 days prior to the end of the 365-day period of coverage for price-later contracts.
7. Continuing educational programs to inform members of potential problems of marketing grain under priced later or deferred price contracts. Farmers should be encouraged to request prompt payment available to them under laws and regulations. Farmers should be informed of the risks and costs involved in selling grain without receiving payment.
8. Maintaining the target balance of the Illinois Grain Insurance Fund at a level that is commensurate with the cash value of Illinois grain commodities.
9. Legislation requiring that arbitration be voluntary on the part of both parties to a grain contract. This should be accomplished by specifying that both parties to a grain contract must agree to arbitration in writing after the dispute arises, as opposed to allowing farmers to be forced to give up their right to use the courts as part of a take-it-or-leave-it contract.
10. Continuing active dialogue and cooperation with IDOA to ensure it has inspectors and examiners in adequate numbers to fulfill the regulatory obligations of the Illinois Grain Code.
11. Updating the incidental grain dealer license for entities with total annual grain purchases that are only in connection with a feed milling operation and do not exceed $500,000.

64. FOOD ACCESS

Food insecurity occurs when food is either too distant or too expensive to purchase. A food desert is one type of food insecurity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert as any census tract where at least 20 percent of the inhabitants are below the poverty line and 33 percent live over a mile or in rural areas more than 10 miles from the nearest supermarket.

We support:

1. Incentives, including but not limited to, offering tax credits or breaks to grocery stores in underserved areas.

2. Policy development to support grocery stores and neighborhood-based farmers markets.
3. Simplifying the process for permitting and launching grocery stores.
4. Programs to encourage heathy eating, food preparation, and proper food storage.
5. Partnering with the community when selecting food desert measurements, policies, and interventions.
6. Increasing the use of third-party and digital platforms for all approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) retailers providing that benefits are not used for service fees or delivery charges.
7. Increasing SNAP approved food sales outlets.
8. Food insecurity networks, like food banks, nonprofit grocers, and produce carts.
9. Farmer cooperatives to provide services such as crop marketing, distribution, guidance on partnering with food banks, and farmer training.
10. The aggregation of farm products and partners to connect institutions, municipalities, school districts, hospitals, community-based organizations, government agencies, and other groups to provide produce to families living in food deserts.
11. Farms connecting directly with food banks, food recovery organizations, and other distributing nonprofits.
12. Expanding the existing tax deduction for food donations to nonprofits.
13. Simplifying food pantry partnerships, expansions, and new development.

65. FOOD WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

We support:

1. Implementing state-based liability protection for food donors and rescue organizations that expand and strengthen those provided by the federal bill, Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. Food rescue includes donation or recovery of surplus food used for feeding hungry people.
2. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offering an education campaign on donation liability protection for potential food donors and food rescue organizations.
3. Expansion of tax deductions or credits, including the creation of a state tax credit, for food donors to offset the costs associated with food donation, even if the food is sold to families at a reduced cost.
4. Incentivizing farmers to donate surplus crops and offset the costs associated with the donation.
5. The USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clarifying food safety donation regulations, for pre-cooked and pre-packaged food items.

Composting

We support:

1. On-farm composting.
2. The use of composted materials on farms, gardens, and in landscaping operations.
3. Updating USDA's definition of compost so that a greater number of potential buyers, including farms, golf courses, or other operations near waterways, are encouraged to purchase compost. Compost refers to a mixture of various decaying organic waste substances, such as food scraps, dead leaves, or manure, used as soil fertilizer.
4. Developing a marketing campaign to build compost demand.

Compost Facilities

We support:

1. Streamlining and simplifying the permitting process for compost facilities, including those that accept landscape waste and food scraps. Food scraps include pre-consumer food scraps, which includes waste generated during the manufacturing and production of food prior to the item being sold and processed as food scraps.
2. Permitting exemptions for small-scale and/or community composting operations.

3. Reducing barriers to entry for composting source-separated organics. Source-separated organics are organic material that have been separated from non-compostable material at the point of generation.
4. Encouraging local zoning to allow compost facilities as a normal agricultural or commercial operation.

Food Scraps

We support:

1. Minimizing regulatory constraints for on-farm composted materials, urban food scrap collection and processing facilities.
2. A separate permitting pathway for anaerobic digestion of source-separated food waste that includes, requirements similar to those imposed on composting source-separated food waste.

66. GRAIN AND HAY GRADING

We support:

1. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to improve standards for grain which will reflect storability and highest potential use.
2. Moisture as a measurement of quantity, not quality.
3. The development and funding of a voluntary certification process for identity-preserved grain.
4. Maintaining close liaison with USDA to ensure proposed grade changes are in the best interests of farmers with particular attention to the proper role for grade factors such as test weight, foreign material, and other quality factors such as breakability.
5. Working with the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) to increase farmer representation on the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Act (GIPSA) Grain Inspection Advisory Committee.
6. An effective grain discount schedule that is determined at the time of contract instead of at the time of delivery.
7. Working with the USDA, private agencies and the State Department of Agriculture to develop and adopt more accurate equipment and procedures for testing moisture percentage and test weights in grain.
8. The State of Illinois and USDA to continue testing, developing grading standards, and identifying various qualities of hay and grain.
9. Changes in grain grading standards to compensate farmers for high quality products.
10. Research that identifies the advantages and disadvantages of selling grain on a value-based or component-pricing basis.
11. Efforts to maintain grain quality in transit.
12. Efforts to standardize and certify testing equipment and operators for all grain toxins.
13. Changes to have processors and elevators show documented economic justification, including actual cost of correction, for all discount rates concerning grain quality degradation, i.e., test weight, off-color, odor, or moisture.
14. Basing moisture and drying schedules for grain based on one-tenth increments of actual moisture recorded over the allowable moisture content instead of the current practice of rounding up to the nearest one-half point.
15. 15 percent grain moisture for corn to be recognized as the industry standard for all disposition excluding storage.
16. Enhanced training to improve grain grading standards for all grain elevators.

67. INDUSTRIAL HEMP PRODUCTION

We support:

1. The production, processing, commercialization, and utilization of industrial hemp.
2. Efforts to improve industrial hemp contracts between growers and processors.
3. The regulation and taxation of any hemp derived products that concentrate or synthesize intoxicating compounds.

68. LIVESTOCK PRICING AND MARKETING

We support:

1. Legislation, on a state and national basis, establishing the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) as the overall authority and provider of oversight to ensure livestock contracts are clearly-written, confidentiality concerns are addressed, investments are protected, and contractors honor the terms of contracts.
2. Providing GIPSA with the authority to enforce contract standards that enhance price transparency and price discovery with livestock contracts.
3. Including monthly slaughter capacity reporting in mandatory price reporting by packers.
4. GIPSA be provided enforcement authority to ensure that all instruments used in quantifying quality factors for value determination for livestock are performing to a set standard.
5. The inclusion of time and date stamp for reporting prices of livestock.
6. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and industry representatives examining the practicality of an industry wide, uniform grading system for pork that includes a quality grade.
7. The development and implementation of value-based marketing systems which convey the value of product quality from the retail market to the farm.
8. Farmers fully understanding the risks involved with using but not participating in a market to set a price.
9. Cooperating with the USDA, livestock groups, and university researchers to develop and utilize alternative price discovery methods.
10. Illinois Department of Agriculture seeking the most efficient method for sale barns to report prices for distribution to farmers.
11. Working with the CME Group, other industry groups, and livestock packers to develop a market mechanism that allows for improved forward pricing contracts and flexible pricing opportunities for farmers.
12. The CME Group and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) recognizing packing plants as delivery points to fulfill livestock contracts, resulting in means to bring convergence between the cash and futures market at expiration of the contract.
13. The Illinois Livestock Development Group (ILDG) working with livestock packers in order to facilitate the expansion of livestock buying stations in Illinois.
14. All efforts to improve the livestock price reporting system.
15. All reporting system changes that will generate reported market prices calculated on premium prices paid as well as price lows in the quality range.
16. Livestock packers securing at least 20 percent of their purchases from the cash market.
17. Additional funding from USDA needed to enable GIPSA to conduct these activities.
18. The creation and development of livestock pricing tools based on the blend of the cash value for the animal and the carcass value from the boxed beef, wholesale pork, or boxed lamb reported values, respectively.

If a packer is offering a contract that is based upon a cash market, the packer needs to participate in this market and help set a price. It is imperative that GIPSA has the oversight on mandatory price reporting - not Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

69. ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Organic products are overseen by a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP)-authorized certifying agency (ACA); produced without excluded or prohibited methods; and produced using only allowed substances. Organic is a production standard set by the USDA NOP for marketing label use (Title 7, Subtitle B, Chapter I, Subchapter M, Part 205).

We support:

1. All methods of agricultural production and marketing provided they offer opportunities to all farmers who qualify or meet required standards.
2. Broad availability of information on the USDA-certified organic program, certification process, and labeling requirements, as well as other unbiased information on organic products or production.
3. Clarity and integrity of organic standards in the marketplace.
4. Funding for organic agriculture, production, education, and technical assistance by non-government organization, universities, and extension.
5. Enhanced marketing opportunities for producers of organically grown commodities just as we support such efforts for conventionally produced crops.
6. Responsible use of buffer strips or other appropriate measures by organic farmers to protect their crops from pollen drift or other factors affecting the integrity of their crops.

Federal Programs and Support

We support:

1. Research into methods for improving soil health and the development of biological and cultural management of disease, weeds, and pests.
2. Organic farmers using organic prices for all federal farmer support programs.
3. Allowing first-year organic crop insurance applicants to the organic crop insurance program to receive the organic price for their crop insurance providing that organic inspection occurs by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) before the crop insurance deadline without final review and the final certificate required at a later date.
4. Assisting farmers to meet current and future consumer demand and expand outreach and education opportunities using the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP).

Certification and Enforcement

We support:

1. Third-party certification to verify compliance with NOP standards.
2. Full and equitable enforcement of NOP standards.
3. A certification and accreditation process that is transparent, risk-based and requires producers and certificate holders to uphold high integrity in their organic production practices.
4. Transparency about enforcement actions taken by NOP.
5. Strict consequences for ACA implicated in domestic or foreign fraud and significant non-compliance.
6. Strengthening USDA import inspection, review, and testing protocols to ensure organic label integrity.
7. Requiring farmers selling organic products to display the USDA Certified Organic logo and their certification number.

70. PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ACT

We support:

1. The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), with the support of the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), enforcing current anti-trust laws pertaining to packer mergers, market concentrations, packer feeding, and contracting.
2. Open, competitive markets which include access to slaughter space and the number of contracted slaughter days should be monitored and enforced if necessary.
3. The DOJ monitoring for a potential monopoly on a regional, rather than a national basis.
4. Including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the decision-making procedure with respect to proposed mergers and acquisitions of meat packing firms.
5. Legislation that grants GIPSA authority to prosecute violators and seek restitution for farmers in cases involving agricultural production, processing, and marketing violations.
6. Incorporation of a dealer trust provision to the Packers and Stockyards Act. The bonding requirement for livestock dealers and packers should be reviewed on an annual basis and be adjusted to reflect the volume of the maximum financial exposure to farmers and/or their brokers and then be made available to the public.
7. Changes to the administration of the Illinois Livestock Auction Market Law that will clarify, as well as strengthen, language relating to the use of custodial accounts by livestock auctions.

We oppose packers owning livestock before slaughter with the exception of farmer-owned closed cooperatives and farmer-owned livestock fed and retail-marketed within the provisions of a specialty product marketing alliance.

71. PLANT PATENTS AND PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION

We support:

1. Plant and utility patents as well as the Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA) as ways to enhance innovations in plant performance that benefit farmers.
2. PVPA as the statute governing the Intellectual Property Rights for the breeders of plant varieties.
3. Maintaining the international and domestic gene/germplasm banks/stores. These should remain easily accessible to the public.
4. Continued plant variety research in the public sector.
5. Compensation for the public contribution in a joint public-private venture.

72. SPECIALTY CROPS

Specialty crops are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops including floriculture.

We support:

1. Enhancing the specialty crops industry’s image through marketing, promotions, legislative engagement, and programming.
2. Efforts to increase individuals’ access to fresh, healthy, local food through direct marketing outlets.
3. Providing programming, legislative, and marketing efforts for the continued growth of the industry and development of various specialty crops that are not already defined by USDA.

4. Funding for specialty crop research, extension services, pathologists, and entomologists to assist with the growth of the industry.
5. The simplification and expansion of the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to provide financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops, including those grown for food or horticultural, to protect against natural disasters that prevent crop planting or result in lower yields or losses.
6. Cost-share funding for USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification.
7. Reduced cost of Good Handling Practices (GHP) certification for small and very small producers.
8. Standardization and clarity in the food grading system.
9. Adoption of the FDA-State Produce Safety Implementation Cooperative Agreement Program.
10. Implementation of and funding for the Value-Added Producer Working Grant Program for both food safety-only and working capital applicants.
11. Funding for the Food Safety Intervention Technologies Research Unit to develop new processes to improve the safety of the food supply and to determine the efficacy and suitability of new biological, chemical, and non-thermal physical technologies.
12. Development of technologies to reduce, control or eliminate foodborne pathogens from food products and contact surfaces.
13. Simplification of state and federal agency food procurement processes.
14. An indemnification program funded by state or federal sources that provides for losses of plants and nursery stocks that must be eradicated to control the spread of serious communicable diseases. Indemnity payments should be based upon current market values.

73. TRADE

We support:

1. Increased agricultural exports to efficiently utilize the productive resources of American agriculture to enhance farm income and improve the farm economy through various trade policies and long-term investments.
2. Trade negotiating authority for the President of the United States in order to achieve:
   - A. A full round of World Trade Organization (WTO) trade negotiations including all industry sectors and giving agriculture a full seat at the table. The overall goal should be to lower both tariff and non-tariff barriers for U.S. exports around the world.
   - B. Science-based binding agreements that resolve sanitary and phytosanitary issues as quickly as possible.
   - C. Tariff equalization and increased market access by requiring U.S. trading partners to eliminate tariff barriers within specified timeframes.
   - D. Changing international agreements and U.S. law to shorten dispute resolution procedures and processes.
   - E. The use of all existing international agreements under the WTO and U.S. countervailing duty laws to prevent the dumping of subsidized agricultural products.
   - F. Immediate, unrestricted trade and distribution of U.S. approved agricultural bio-tech products.
   - G. Immediate harmonization of domestic food safety and quality standards with our international trading partners based on the guidelines set by the WTO and increased funding to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure adequate food inspections at the borders.
   - H. Uniform intellectual property protection standards.
3. Improved market access and reduced trade barriers through support of bilateral, regional, and multi-lateral free trade agreements.

4. International Monetary Fund (IMF) efforts provided their actions are based upon sound fiscal and economic policies and further facilitate world trade.
5. Educating our members, legislators, and others on the importance of global currency relationships to agricultural trade and foreign competition.
6. Increased funding for, promotion of U.S. agricultural products through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs like Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD).
7. Congressional approval of any embargoes of agricultural products proposed by the President.
8. Developing a program that compensates farmers through market loss payments:
    A. For competitive disadvantages to U.S. farmers resulting from burdensome domestic regulations or standards that are more strict than those in other countries.
    B. If currency values harm U.S. farm trade and if it can be achieved within WTO guidelines.
9. Resumption of normal trading relations and "most favored nation status" with Cuba.
10. Inspections of imports to the U.S. to protect our domestic production capacity and supply of agricultural products from infestations.
11. Improving informational, organizational, and marketing linkages between and among North and South American farmers.
12. A U.S. Foreign Aid Program that:
    A. Provides leadership in enhancing global food security and economic development.
    B. Increases federal commitment to food and agricultural assistance programs.
    C. Provides foreign aid in the form of agricultural products and value-added agricultural products rather than cash, whenever feasible.
    D. Encourage recipient nations to use or purchase U.S. agricultural goods and services.
    E. Gives emergency food relief needs the highest priority in foreign aid programs.
    F. Does not stimulate production or distribution of farm commodities for export that are in competition with the U.S.
    G. Included P.L. 480 as an important part of a broader strategy for expanding U.S. food aid.

We oppose:
1. Any U.S. policies that restrict agricultural exports.
2. The subsidization of any direct foreign competition.
3. Use of the Precautionary Principle.
4. Monetary policies that harm U.S. trade.
5. Shipping restrictions that adversely affect agricultural products.

74. URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban agriculture encompasses a wide range of activities involving the raising, cultivation, processing, marketing, and distribution of food in urban and suburban settings. Generally urban agriculture involves outdoor and indoor vertical production, indoor warehouse farms, greenhouses, rooftop farms, hydroponic and aquaponic facilities.

Urban agriculture includes community gardens and urban farms. Community gardens are smaller-scale urban agriculture sites, often serving a neighborhood, where individuals and families grow food primarily for personal consumption or for donation. Urban farms are larger-scale, more intensive sites where food may be grown by an organization or private enterprise, and often include entrepreneurial opportunities such as growing food for sale. Urban farms include both for and nonprofit enterprises.

We support:

1. Recognizing the importance of urban agriculture and its contribution to the agricultural economy.
2. Urban agriculture providing safe, attractive, and welcoming spaces for neighbors to gather and foster a sense of community.
3. County Farm Bureaus working with units of government to develop agriculture-friendly zoning policies.
4. Using land management tools such as land banks, land trusts, conservation easements, and long-term leases on public and private lands so urban agriculture can flourish.
5. Advocating for new developments to include opportunities for agriculture, including rooftop and home gardens, community gardens, and urban farms where appropriate.
6. Access to services including trash collection, composting, water, and storage opportunities to minimize costs and reduce barriers to entry.
7. Ensuring that urban agricultural sites have access to affordable clean water sources.
8. Diverting organic waste into compost.
9. Using raised beds or hydroponics to address soil-quality concerns.
10. Using season extension tools such as indoor facilities and high tunnels.
11. The keeping of bees and beehives in urban settings providing that best management practices are followed.
12. Urban agriculture sites gaining access to agricultural markets.
13. Developing infrastructure to transport and store food for market.
14. Providing job training and skills development to beginning farmers and garden managers.

75. USDA REPORTING AND OPERATIONS

We support:

1. Continuance of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a cabinet level department.
2. Efforts of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service, and all other governmental agricultural agencies to transition from survey-based data collection to fact-based data collection by using previously collected data from said agencies and encourage members to provide their most accurate factual data when requested for crop, livestock and other reports on a voluntary basis.
3. The USDA improving the accuracy and timely release of national and international statistics and maintain the confidentiality of individual farm reports.
4. Legislation to reinstate public access of the Common Land Unit (CLU) data to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Data Gateway.
5. Educational efforts to inform the American consumer that the USDA serves a variety of consumer interests and not just those of the farm population.
6. Locally-elected farmer county committees to administer and oversee USDA farm and agricultural credit programs.
7. Maintaining the NRCS within the USDA.
8. The USDA to adequately fund, staff, and train local offices to enhance farmer services.
9. Maintaining the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) budget at levels no lower than the 2007 budget appropriation.
10. Long-term funding of the USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA).
11. USDA plans to create a new soybean yield estimate model for the September crop report that reflects the significant changes in soybean production models.
12. The USDA including the number and origin of imported and destination of exported livestock in monthly livestock reports.
13. USDA efforts to enhance and expand electronic filing of USDA forms and dissemination of information.
14. Upgrades of computer technology and appropriate software to allow the NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), RMA, and NASS to utilize and share the same farm program

enrollment and production information, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are utilized.

15. A thorough review, including local input, of any proposed closure of a local USDA or FSA office before a decision is made.
16. NASS to regularly report data on the production and use of ethanol co-products used for livestock feed.
17. Releasing USDA reports on grains during the morning mandated break to allow all market participants equal access to the information.

We oppose the expansion of the locally-elected county committees by the addition of appointed committee members.

76. GOVERNMENT CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

We support:

1. Conservation programs with a focus on protecting environmentally sensitive areas with filter strips, buffers, and other beneficial practices while reducing overall program costs.
2. Legislation which ensures that both tenant and landlord interests will be fairly protected.
3. Limitations on participation rates so as not to adversely affect local farmland rental rates.

FSA Programs

We support:

1. The continued funding of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through current methods, plus private sources on contributions (e.g., conservation groups, hunting groups, and environmental groups) to remove fragile lands from production.
2. Basing the judging criteria for CRP enrollment upon the land's erosion potential as cropland and not on its current erosion status.
3. An expansion of the continuous sign-up CRP acreage to include:
   - A. Filter strips along waterways.
   - B. Greater widths of waterways, filter strips, field borders, and riparian buffers.
   - C. Setbacks at road intersections.
   - D. Crop protection product setbacks around tile inlet structures.
   - E. Up to one-acre filter strips around standpipes and other intakes where surface water enters directly into subsurface water.
   - F. Grassed terraces.
   - G. Buffers around villages, timbered areas, irrigation reservoirs, ponds, and stormwater retention basins.
   - H. Expanding the statewide allocations on field borders and upland restoration projects.
   - I. Approving a 20 percent incentive for all projects using native prairie grasses, forbs, shrubs, or trees.
   - J. Allowing enrollment of and acceptance of "infeasible to farm" acres (an area that is too small or isolated to be economically farmed).
   - K. Farms declared not insurable in the crop insurance program because of wildlife crop damage to be eligible to be enrolled in the CRP.
4. The practice of planting vegetative filter strips along both sides of ditches and waterways to improve water quality. Strips of variable widths should be eligible for the CRP.
5. Programs being made available to give farmers viable economic options to traditional crop production following expiration of CRP contracts.
6. The ability of all drainage district easements to be included in the CRP filter strip program.
7. Provisions that would allow farmers and landowners to terminate participation in the CRP if the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) cannot meet the agreed contractual payment amount within 30 days of its due date or is forced by budget constraints to

reduce the annual payment amount as set forth in the CRP contract. If the farmer opts out of the CRP all past due monies will be paid with accrued interest.

8. Continuation of CRP on fragile and environmentally sensitive lands formerly enrolled in CRP if the CRP is not continued at current levels. Qualified land areas should be determined by county Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
9. Encouraging the USDA to give adequate credit during CRP sign-ups for areas throughout the nation that experience wind erosion on sandy soils.
10. The broadening of criteria for enrollment or re-enrollment of land in CRP. Examples of the criteria include but are not limited to:
    A. Land with the highest Environmental Benefits Index (EBI).
    B. Land targeted based on type of CRP cover or conservation practice, with priority given to land in trees, alley cropping, or with special conservation attributes.
    C. Land targeted based on water quality, air quality, soil quality, and wildlife.
    D. Land that, if cultivated, would be most damaging to the environment. For example, land that would likely opt out of farm programs and conservation compliance due to high compliance costs.
11. The elimination of the Erodibility Index as an exclusionary consideration for concentrated CRP sign up.
12. Wildlife habitat improvement, especially on CRP acreage.
13. The Conservation Reserve Program's State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) practice that provides financial incentives to producers.
14. Recognition in the EBI that qualifying established cover practices on acreages being re-enrolled in the CRP provide certain benefits over destroying existing stands to plant preferred species.
15. The evaluation of all CRP property by the county NRCS office staff to ensure that previously recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been maintained before the property can be re-enrolled in CRP.
16. Haying and grazing of CRP acres at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture in weather-related or other emergency situations in a timely manner.
17. Each state Farm Service Agency (FSA) office determining CRP rates and acreage qualifications as opposed to the national USDA office.
18. Increasing the enrollment of filter strips in the CRP and offering incentives for re-enrollment.
19. The continuation and expansion of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) with full funding.
20. Any increase to national CRP acreage cap that prioritizes continuous sign-up selection of most environmentally sensitive ground and limit acres for future sign up.
21. Allowing USDA to authorize grazing to be part of the routine management on CRP acres in Illinois when conducted under an approved grazing management plan as part of the approved conservation plan.

We oppose:

1. Any effort to allow the public to automatically use or have access to private property that is enrolled in CRP.
2. Further changes in CRP which would allow conservation acreage to be brought back into permanent production before the ten-year contract expires.
3. The use of CRP land for biomass fuel production without a corresponding reduction in CRP payments.

Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Programs

We support:

1. Allowing an exemption to the NRCS manual for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) money to be used for streambank stabilization practices prior to the adjacent land's

expiration in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract or a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contract.

2. The continuation and expansion of the EQIP and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with full funding, as long as these programs complement - but do not replace - programs in the new farm bill.
3. Providing a clear explanation of the CSP that would create interest and help more farmers qualify for this program.

State of Illinois Programs

We support the Illinois Department of Agriculture creating and implementing conservation programs for Illinois farmers.

77. FARM CREDIT

We support:

1. The availability of adequate sources of credit for all agricultural interests.
2. Agricultural lenders publicizing their rates and loan policies.
3. Farm Service Agency (FSA) assistance to those borrowers who cannot obtain credit otherwise.
4. Continued graduation of FSA borrowers who exhibit the ability to obtain credit from conventional sources and continue to work with FSA in developing improved and flexible programs with more effective use of FSA funds.
5. FSA in providing adequate levels and terms of credit in a constructive and responsible manner.
6. Reviewing and recommending appropriate FSA agency policy on loan term limits, loan size limits, and interest rate subsidies.
7. FSA loans be secured by adequate collateral and reasonable repayment capacity.
8. The use of past business performance, when available, as a strong indicator of future performance when considering approval of an FSA loan for a farmer.
9. The USDA improving all USDA loan programs to:
   - A. Adopt an option to have pre-approval for a loan for six months.
   - B. Expand the eligibility requirements of the program.
   - C. Recognize the increasing cost of land and equipment when determining the cap of the loan program.
   - D. Provide assistance in filling out the application.
   - E. Promote the programs through podcasts, training, and seminars.
   - F. Review requirements to graduate a loan for beginning farmers.
10. Educational programs for members and agricultural lenders on financial management and marketing programs.
11. Lenders cooperating with federal and state programs designed to help farmers with financial stress.
12. Illinois Finance Authority's (IFA) current agricultural loan programs and will cooperate with IFA in the expansion of existing programs and the development of new programs.
13. Legislation so that persons who have made prepayments to failed licensees for production inputs or services will receive a 100 percent refund of those payments, making the purchaser of the inputs first in line as a secured creditor.
14. Increased funding for federal guaranteed farm loan programs. These programs should be made more user friendly for both bankers and farmers by allowing increased flexibility of repayment terms and minimizing paperwork.
15. Seeking legislation so alfalfa and grassland forages are considered farm storage facility loan commodities.
16. The Farm Credit System (FCS) remaining available to the farmer-owners through the cooperative system as an alternative to commercial banks.

17. Commercial banks, the FCS, and other lenders seeking opportunities to cooperate in meeting the financing needs of farmers.
18. Elimination of the “exit provision” in the Farm Credit Act.

We oppose:

1. Any move by commercial banks and/or bankers to alter the structure of the FCS, including attempts to replace farmers on boards of directors with commercial bankers.
2. Commercial banks having access to money procured by virtue of the agency status enjoyed by the FCS.
3. The sale of district FCS banks to commercial or private banking interests.
4. All efforts to limit access to credit by major credit suppliers or to limit competition or to artificially set interest rates by government edict.

78. GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICIES

We support:

1. Government policies designed to encourage economic stability, increased productivity, and a greater ability to compete in the international market.
2. Using a federal budget surplus to reduce the federal debt and to cut taxes.
3. Federal policies bringing about lower real interest rates.
4. A reduction in the size of the federal government.
5. A constitutional amendment to require the federal government to operate on a balanced budget.
6. A constitutional amendment to restrict the spending authority of the federal government to a realistic percentage of the gross national product (GNP).
7. A requirement that federal and state government agencies return unspent money to their respective treasuries without a budget cut or penalty for the new fiscal year.
8. Legislation or a constitutional amendment to require the federal government to fund programs which it mandates on state or local governments.
9. A requirement that new programs be adopted only when existing programs are reduced or eliminated as a means to control government spending.
10. Requiring competitive bidding for any state or federal project.
11. Privatization of governmental services that could provide savings to the taxpayer and render government services more economical.
12. A sustained long-term monetary policy which will minimize inflation and deflation of prices.
13. An independent Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System that includes individuals with a working knowledge of agriculture.
14. A full and complete independent annual audit of all activities of the Federal Reserve System.
15. Making the adoption of sound economic policies by the state and federal government a major priority.
16. The inclusion of a citizenship question on the U.S. Census.

We oppose:

1. Awarding federal grant monies to citizen action groups.
2. Increased taxes unless accompanied by significant spending cuts. In such cases, the tax base should be broadened rather than increasing existing tax rates.
3. Efforts to shift programs “on budget” or “off budget” in order to mask the true economic condition of our nation.
4. The financing of gambling facilities through tax exempt industrial development bonds or state guaranteed loans.
5. The application and use of subjective ranking (e.g., ESG Environmental, Social and Governance scoring) for individuals, businesses or organizations as a means test to

qualify for financing, participation at any level of commerce or freedom to make day-to-day decisions.

79. GOVERNMENT FARM POLICIES

We believe United States agriculture should be an integral part of the solution for hunger, energy, environment, food security, our balance of trade, and national security. In order to accomplish these goals, the Farm Bill must address world competition, humanitarian need, and world trade obligations. A stable, safe agricultural production system is essential to the United States' economy and national security.

To accomplish this objective, we believe:

1. Consumers should have a reliable, abundant, safe, and nutritious food supply.
2. In enhancing U.S. agriculture's competitiveness in the world market.
3. In minimizing world hunger and nutrition deficiencies.
4. In creating a long-term, competitive, desirable agricultural growth industry.
5. In improving the quality of rural life by increasing rural economic development.
6. In providing revenue protection to farmers thus protecting net farm income.
7. The market should give accurate economic signals to consumers and farmers.
8. There should be less reliance on government and more on the market.
9. Improvements to the environment can be achieved through expanded soil conservation, water and air quality initiatives, and advanced technological procedures that are science-based and are economically feasible.
10. Farmers should be compensated for their positive impact on habitat, wildlife, and the environment.
11. Stable funding should be provided for USDA AgrAbility Programs.
12. In retaining base acres on any farm participating in a renewable energy project and treating them the same as CRP base acres.

We oppose:

1. Severing the essential link between the nutrition title and the commodity title of the Farm Bill.
2. Any type of government supply control or acreage reduction program, with the exception of conservation programs.
3. A Farmer Owned Reserve for agricultural commodities.
4. The extension of Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) commodity loans beyond the current nine-month term.
5. The use of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) scoring or any other subjective scoring method if it pertains to any farm policies or any future Farm Bill programs.

We support:

1. Appropriate income assistance until reforms in taxation, regulation, and market access and growth are achieved.
2. Maintaining the sanctity of contracts established in the Farm Bill.
3. Allowing tenants with multiple landlords to treat each farm as a separate entity for compliance with the Farm Bill.
4. Not holding tenants responsible for landlord's actions of farm program payments and eligibility. This should hold steady as long as the tenant had no involvement in what took place. The farm in question should go through the hearing process but other farms should not be affected. Actions by a landlord should not place any tenant farm program payments in jeopardy. The tenant should be able to maintain eligibility for all farms.
5. The ability of landlords to refuse payment from the farm program and allow tenants the ability to obtain complete payment from the farm program (even if a combination lease exists between the landlord and tenant).

6. The elimination of any United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirement to report the specific cash rental amounts outlined in lease agreements between a landlord and a tenant in an effort to protect a farmer's right to privacy. We do, however, support the requirement to report the type of lease agreement.
7. Strengthening the criteria for non-landowner persons eligible for farm program payments by requiring a significant contribution of active personal management in the farm decision-making process and labor in the farming operation. The current exemption for crop share landowners should be continued.
8. Farmers ability to improve existing drainage systems without being penalized. Land that has been in production, including pasture, should be exempt from the sodbuster and swampbuster provisions.
9. The implementation of more efficient processes, systems, and procedures in order to consolidate and simplify farm program participant visits to the USDA.
10. Using common dates between Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) for acreage reporting deadlines.
11. Consolidation of the power of attorney form to enable the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to honor the same power of attorney forms.
12. Open enrollment of land in the farm program that was not previously in the program and has changed tenancy or ownership during the duration of the Farm Bill.
13. Government agencies serving farmers by adjusting hours to accommodate the needs of farmers with off-farm employment and increased use of internet for electronic filing.
14. Requiring USDA to complete evaluation within 10 business days on requests to clear fence rows and/or timber on land. If after 10 business days the evaluation is not complete, USDA forfeits the right to object and/or penalize.
15. The means to implement and administer programs being in place prior to starting dates for new programs.
16. Adding alfalfa and grassland forages as covered commodities.
17. Requirement changes to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) that would allow government owned land into the program if it is leased by a farmer for the duration of the contract period.
18. Allowing a compliant entity to be eligible to participate in USDA programs on all parcels that are not in violation of swampbuster or sodbuster regulations.
19. Eliminating the requirement for reporting non-program grass waterways/fallow areas that are baled for forage. If eliminating the forage reporting on non-program acres is unachievable, we support reporting acres only at the time when the principal field crop is reported.
20. A commodity loan program.
21. Raising loan rates above levels established in the 2008 Farm Bill for current program commodities and loan repayments be credited back to CCC to maintain budget neutrality.
22. Payments or programs that compensate farmers for activities deemed socially or environmentally beneficial.
23. Encouraging production and stewardship decisions that will attract public support.
24. Farmer option to update the base acres for all acres enrolled in USDA programs to reflect the actual acres planted and the commodities grown during the initial year of every Farm Bill cycle.
25. Reinstating the base acres on farmland after land is removed from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) regardless if FSA can locate the original base acreage reduction form included in the initial CRP enrollment.
26. Allowing farms that have not been participating in farm programs and are not eligible to receive program benefits to establish a base and enroll in future farm programs.
27. The continuation of and funding for Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP).
28. Livestock Disaster and Emergency Program provisions.
29. Individual farm program payments for any actively engaged farmer regardless of the farm's organizational structure.

30. Farm program payments based on units of production (i.e., acres, bushels, head, pound, etc.) regardless of farm size, business organization, or management structure as the fairest and most equitable means of distributing payments to farmers.

Future Farm Policy

IFB members believe the Farm Bill must be WTO-compliant, provide price and revenue protection for farmers, and link nutrition and commodity programs. Crop insurance remains our top priority in the Farm Bill. The bill must continue to feature commodity programs and encourage production and stewardship decisions that attract public support. We support robust conservation programs that will help farmers achieve state nutrient loss reduction goals.

Crop Insurance

We support:

1. Creating a local or state farmer committee oversight and appeals process for RMA decisions on overspray and planting dates.
2. Creating a state or county committee to provide oversight and appeals process for RMA decisions that adversely impact crop insurance policy holders.
3. A producer who elects to include a Harvest Price Option (HPO) should be able to receive the harvest price if it is higher on prevented plant acres.

Farm Programs

We support:

1. Allowing producers to update base acres and yields.
2. Allowing producers or landowners who are subject to a new or previous farm reconstitution to either combine farms or maintain an individual farm number.
3. Inflation-adjusted farm program payment limits.
4. Increased commodity loan rates.
5. Maintaining Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in the Farm Bill.

Specialty Crops

We support:

1. Expanding the size and scope of crop insurance tools.
2. A permanent structure to deliver emergency economic assistance.
3. Expanding and making permanent various direct purchase and procurement programs.
4. Industry research and grant programs that promote new agronomy practices and technologies, partnerships among industry participants infrastructure development, and the adoption of on-farm value-added activities.

Dairy Programs

We support:

1. Risk management programs that address negative price differentials.
2. Changing or eliminating state-by-state adjustment factors in Dairy Revenue Protection (Dairy-RP) that greatly limited support to producers.
3. Improving the accuracy of Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) feed price component.
4. Providing National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) sufficient resources so it can more accurately estimate alfalfa prices.

Disaster Assistance

We support:

1. Maintaining programs for animal disease prevention and management.
2. Federal government spending that protects agricultural production and processing from cyber-attacks.

We oppose creation of a permanent disaster program that would jeopardize a robust crop insurance program and create public relations problems for agriculture.

Conservation Programs

We support:

1. Creation of a per-acre cover crop discount on crop insurance premiums that also rewards early adopters.
2. A 5-year CRP contract.
3. A flexible, renewable one-year program that pays producers rates similar to CRP that incentivizes specified nutrient loss reduction or management practices on working ground or land currently in production with an emphasis on improving water quality.
4. Incentives for farmers who use cover crops by giving them credit for sequestering carbon.
5. Creation of a water quality credit for producers.
6. Publicly funded university research on soil carbon.
7. Using CSP to reward producers for practices they have already adopted and give more points for maintaining practices over time.
8. Addressing the shortage of conservation engineers to approve projects.
9. Providing additional flexibility for harvesting cover crops for feed during normal conditions, not just for prevent plant.

Solar Energy

We support a federal (USDA or Department of Energy) program to incentivize solar panel installations on farm buildings and bins.

80. LABOR

We support:

1. A proactive and positive effort to pursue a dialogue with organized labor to identify common ground and common goals to achieve a common good and improve farm profitability.
2. The effective and prompt administration of existing laws to resolve secondary boycotts or other illegal actions which disrupt the orderly flow of commerce.
3. Maintaining the agriculture exemption for overtime pay provisions under the Illinois Minimum Wage Law.
4. A study by the appropriate state agencies regarding the programs and activities of federally funded Legal Services Corporation entities in Illinois. Such a study would review the impact of such programs on agricultural operations.
5. American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) efforts in lobbying Congress to investigate the Legal Service Corporation's behavior and scrutinize its budget.
6. Establishing improved programs for agricultural guest workers that assist in finding, retaining, and maintaining an adequate, legal, and cost-competitive labor supply.
7. Permanent employment-based immigration visas for those individuals who have a demonstrated work history and can pass an appropriate background screening.

We oppose:

1. The use, by either labor or management, of force, coercion, intimidation, secondary boycotts or other such means designed to force its will upon the other.
2. Lawsuits which are filed against agricultural growers by Legal Services Corporation entities which create economic hardship for the agricultural operations involved and appear to be intended only to harass the employer of farm labor into providing additional benefits without justification.
3. All legislation which increases the revenue base for legal assistance activities in the State of Illinois.

4. Legislation that would require state licensure and inspection for electrical work performed on agricultural property and single-family residences.
5. The elimination of the present family farm exemption in the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
6. Amnesty (as defined as a general pardon for offenses against the laws of the United States of America) for undocumented immigrants.

H-2A Work Program Administration

We support:

1. Clarity in H-2A regulations and administration.
2. Streamlining the H-2A application process by using electronic application filing.
3. Allowing employers to file a single application for labor needs, even if labor needs are staggered throughout the year.
4. Removing the “seasonality” requirement to make all agricultural jobs eligible.
5. Lengthening the term of stay for workers.
6. A quicker, less intensive application process for hiring H-2A workers if the farm has had no changes from the previous year.
7. Staggered dates of entry for the guest worker program.
8. Employer specific visas.
9. Withholding state and federal payroll taxes from guest worker wages.
10. Administration and oversight of the H-2A guest worker program within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

H-2A Work Program Operations

We support:

1. Protection of the guest worker program to preserve the labor force required for farms.
2. More flexibility for agricultural employers in the H-2A program.
3. Improvements to the guest worker program to help farms be profitable and operational for future generations by offering farms the ability to retain skilled labor and recruit workers to meet their farms specialized needs.
4. Recruitment of repeat, qualified workforce for efficiency in working on a host farm.
5. The farmer and worker sharing the expenses of the guest worker program visas, transportation, housing, and related expenses.
6. Allowing a H-2A worker with time remaining on their visa to work on other qualified farms, if the original farm requesting the employee no longer has work.

We oppose:

1. Department of Labor's (DOL) administration of the H-2A guest worker program.
2. The Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) being above the state minimum wage.
3. Increased administrative expenses of the guest worker program.
4. Administrative steps and paperwork that slow down the hiring process.
5. Additional state regulations that add application processing delays.

81. RISK MANAGEMENT/CROP INSURANCE

We encourage continued farmer education of risk management alternatives, efforts to refine existing risk management tools, and the development of new crop insurance, livestock and other risk management tools.

Risk Management

We support:

1. Providing leadership in seeking new ways for farmers to manage risk through the private sector.

2. The use of pilot programs that would serve to assist farmers in learning to utilize various risk management tools for all products, including livestock. Farmers willing to participate in the pilot program should be allowed to choose from a variety of approved risk management methods designed to substantially manage the risk of the farming operation. The cost of implementing the chosen risk management method should be subsidized during the pilot program.
3. The development and improvement of livestock risk management tools to provide greater support during unusual events beyond the control of the farmer.
4. Education programs that provide risk assessment and risk management as well as professional education for farmers in marketing, financial management, and government regulations.
5. The necessary legislative and regulatory changes to establish a Farmer Investment Savings Account into which a farmer could contribute pre-tax dollars for self-insurance and be allowed to make withdrawals at the contributor's discretion.
6. Fully funding the Standard Reinsurance Agreement at the levels outlined in the 2014 Farm Bill.

Crop Insurance

We support a crop insurance program which:

1. Provides payments for actual losses, including losses incurred from delayed or prevented plantings, arising from natural causes.
2. Requires consistent interpretation and implementation of all federal crop insurance provisions, especially Prevent Plant provisions.
3. Provides coverage that is written and losses paid on the basis of dollars per acre rather than based on a guaranteed level of production.
4. Is offered and serviced through private companies, willing and able to assume some level of risk, as opposed to Farm Service Agency offices.
5. Can be affordably reinsured through the federal government.
6. Eliminates federally mandated requirements in order to be eligible to participate in the federal farm programs.
7. Allows the Secretary of Agriculture the right to extend the planting deadline for crop insurance purposes for untimely plantings due to weather delays.
8. Allows farmers and/or landlords to opt out of crop insurance coverage, but in so doing would not be eligible for federal disaster payments on crop losses.
9. Requires that the individual county final yield averages needed for Area Risk Protection Insurance policies be released one month prior to the deadline for the crop insurance sales closing date for the federal crop insurance program. This date should be uniform for all regions involved in the program.
10. Allows individual units to be insured on a Farm Service Agency (FSA) optional unit basis.
11. Requires all United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies accepting production data, including acreage and yield data that has been certified, to reconcile the data in order to streamline the reporting process and reduce the potential for fraud and abuse.
12. Requires the automatic extension of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) acreage reporting deadline in the event the FSA certification deadline is extended. The extension of the deadlines should maintain the existing time period between the deadlines.
13. Promotes the use of Soil Productivity, derived from existing County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Surveys, as a guide for establishing base T yields for Federal Crop Insurance.
14. Utilize pricing data for insurable crops during multiple months throughout the growing season in order to establish a revenue guarantee for revenue-based crop insurance policies.
15. Maintains both a fall pricing and spring pricing option for revenue policies.
16. Studies the elimination of Catastrophic (CAT) coverage and applying those subsidy dollars to higher coverage levels.

17. Allows Written Agreements, once granted, to remain effective until loss ratios dictate otherwise.
18. Achieves actuarial soundness by crop, county, and state by devoting additional resources to allow annual review of RMA rates for all crops in all states, with priority given to:
    A. Adjusting insurance rates to completely and expeditiously reflect mandated loss ratios.
    B. Full implementation of rate reductions for states with consistently low loss ratios.
    C. Including non-insured ground in production review in order to receive the most accurate assessment possible of each county's production capacity.
19. Devotes additional research dollars to improve existing policies to develop new insurance tools and foster the development of new and innovative delivery systems.
20. Requires clear delineation during the sales process and the billing process to clearly distinguish between federal crop insurance policies and private company add-on products.
21. Separates basic or enterprise units by practice - for example - initial- or double-crop soybeans, where a claim calculation of one practice has no effect on the other practices and the lengthening of planting dates to better reflect variety maturity, growing season length, Land Grant University or processor recommendations, geographic areas, and weather conditions.
22. Allows double-cropped feedgrains to be insured as a separate unit if best management practices are followed.
23. Allows the use of all elevator quality factors conducted by certified graders using certified testing equipment. These factors include moisture, foreign material, test weight and damage.
24. Offers replant benefits that accurately reflect actual cost of replanting the damaged crop.
25. Allows farmers and landlords to receive replant benefits reflective of their share of the expenses to replant the damaged crop, regardless of the crop insurance company or type of crop insurance policy they or the landlord/tenant have.
26. Requires RMA claim guidelines to take into consideration economic justification when Best Management Practices are used to determine treatment thresholds and timeliness of applications.
27. Allows crop insurance agents to be involved in the claims process to provide enhanced and seamless service to farmers.
28. Collects premiums for spring-planted crops no earlier than December first.
29. Allows beginning farmers to use county yield estimates instead of the calculated T-yield when establishing yields for federal crop insurance.
30. More closely matches RMA's discount schedules to typical grain industry discount schedules.
31. Works with USDA RMA to update Multi-Peril Crop Insurance soybean earliest plant dates.

82. SOCIAL SECURITY

We support:

1. Studies and pilot programs testing the feasibility of private sector alternatives to Social Security as a means to devise long-term solutions to maintain the solvency of the Social Security trust fund and to ensure retirement benefits for all Americans.
2. Stabilizing benefits rather than increasing Social Security taxes.
3. Continued separate deductions for Social Security taxes to make them clearly identifiable.
4. Correction of the inequity in the method of determining earnings of self-employed persons subject to Social Security taxes when a substantial portion of the earnings are related to a return on investment in business property. A rent equivalent should be made an allowable deduction from earnings for this purpose.
5. Allowing self-employed persons to deduct their Social Security taxes as a business expense.
6. Repeal of the Social Security offset law.

We oppose:

1. Regulations which classify Conservation Reserve Program payments to Social Security recipients as earned income. They should be considered as rent.
2. Social Security payments to alien workers who reside outside the U.S. or its territories.
3. The use of a total farm payroll test to determine if wages are subject to Social Security taxes.
4. Using Social Security funds for purposes other than Social Security.

83. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC IMAGE

We will be a leading voice for Illinois agriculture.

We support:

1. Programs to improve the visibility and contributions of IAA and of county Farm Bureaus.
2. Creating public relations programs and promoting to news outlets a favorable view of farmers and agriculture while actively monitoring public opinion toward agriculture.
3. Centralized, up-to-date information so that members can respond to issues of public concern.
4. Web-based resources to help county Farm Bureaus respond quickly and consistently to local issues.
5. Programs that help non-farmer members understand and support IFB's goals and objectives.
6. The use of scientific names by the media, governmental agencies and healthcare professionals in referring to viruses and diseases.
7. News reporting that balances benefits with possible risks to both agriculture and consumers.
8. Challenging individuals and organizations that misrepresent scientific evidence and harm farmers' financial well-being or their credibility.
9. Encouraging agribusinesses, through their advertising, to present a positive and professional image of farmers and agriculture.
10. Encouraging companies that provide animal feed, shelter and health products to advertise the positive aspects of animal production in addition to their products.
11. The work of non-profit agricultural organizations whose mission is to improve the image of agriculture and to confront negative messages.
12. County Farm Bureau partnerships with other farm organizations to improve public understanding of agriculture.
13. The training of farmer spokespersons to convey a knowledgeable and professional message in response to all media requests especially those of a national platform on agriculture.
14. County Farm Bureaus using the County Farm Bureau Certified Director Program.

84. FARM BUREAU RELATIONSHIP WITH AFFILIATED COMPANIES

We believe that Farm Bureau members are the foundation upon which all affiliated companies were built.

We support:

1. County Farm Bureaus maintaining and improving working relationships with affiliated company boards of directors and management through interlocking board members and other means.

2. Holding periodic affiliated company and Farm Bureau joint board meetings on both the state and county level and to hold regular county Farm Bureau and affiliated company joint staff meetings.
3. Affiliated companies to consult with the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA) and county Farm Bureaus before initiating major changes in products, services, policies, and operating procedures that impact the Farm Bureau organizations or Farm Bureau members.

85. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

We support:

1. Regulations to protect the public health, safety and welfare, provided:
   - A. The regulations are based upon scientific data which has been subject to replication and peer review.
   - B. The costs as well as the benefits of the regulations have been carefully weighed.
   - C. The regulations have been subject to independent analysis and public scrutiny.
   - D. Alternatives to regulation have been considered, especially the provision of market-based incentives.
   - E. The regulations respect the practicalities of doing business in the industry being regulated.
2. Cooperating with American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), on the regulatory process to better protect agriculture's interest during rule-making.
3. Requiring the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to collaborate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in developing regulations impacting agriculture.
4. Member involvement in the regulatory process by responding during comment periods.
5. The review of all state and national regulation to ensure legislative intent is being followed.
6. Legislation to reduce and eliminate duplicative services, programs, and burdensome government regulations.

We oppose establishing law through Executive Orders that circumvent Congress, do not allow for public review and input, exceed constitutional and statutory guidelines, or impose significant economic impact on citizens, businesses, and local or state governments.

86. INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS IN FARM BUREAU

We believe the county Farm Bureaus are the strength of the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA). We recognize that county Farm Bureaus are important to the individual members, and it is these individual members that become the most integral parts of the IAA. The support and direction of the individual members are of utmost importance to the organization.

We support:

1. Active involvement of men and women of all ages in the committee structure on the state and county level.
2. County and state member programs to enhance the value of Farm Bureau membership.
3. County Farm Bureaus to appoint at least one member of the Women's, Promotion and Education, and Young Farmer/Young Leader Committees to serve on county Farm Bureau standing committees. The representatives of each county committee should meet regularly with their Board of Directors.
4. County Farm Bureaus to present opportunities for active members to gain the background and experience necessary to be effective leaders.
5. County Farm Bureaus creating a pathway to engage younger members in county activities, volunteer opportunities, and leadership.

6. Young Farmer/Young Leader Committee as an important part in assuring the maximum opportunity for young farmers to participate in Farm Bureau programs.
7. Counties following the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Young Farmer and Rancher program age limits so that county Young Farmer and Young Leader Committees will be eligible for the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Young Leader and AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher programs.

87. LEGISLATIVE AND AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP

We will:
1. Take aggressive positions in the development of legislation and regulations.
2. Involve county Farm Bureau leaders and members in the legislative and regulatory process.
3. Involve various groups and organizations in the development of such legislation and regulations when there is common interest in order to find the best solutions to the complex problems facing us.
4. Cooperate with county Farm Bureaus in developing and implementing programs to familiarize legislators with rural problems and concerns and to familiarize rural leaders with urban problems and concerns.

We urge the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA) to take a leadership role in working with groups and organizations with common goals to help develop a common policy position on national legislation and regulations.

88. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

We support:
1. A person's right to individually or collectively contribute time and money to candidates of his or her choice.
2. The participation in the political process, both as individual citizens and members of the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA).
3. Equal access to government for all citizens regardless of political engagement.
4. The expansion of political involvement programs to promote Farm Bureau policy by aiding and promoting candidates for public office who, through their actions, have supported the goals and purposes of the IAA.

89. UNIFORM COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

We urge county Farm Bureau boards of directors to review annually the Uniform Cooperative Agreement between the county Farm Bureaus and the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA). Attention should be given to the need for counties and the IAA Board of Directors to support policy positions once adopted by the IAA delegates.

90. 9-1-1 TELEPHONE SYSTEM

We support:
1. The enhanced 9-1-1 telephone system.
2. Providing input into the implementation of the local system.

3. All funding intended for 9-1-1 systems should carry through to those facilities.
4. Increasing the 9-1-1 surcharge on cell phones to adequately support the 9-1-1 telephone system.
5. Requiring the State of Illinois to forward 9-1-1 fees to the 9-1-1 operating systems within 30 days of receiving such fees.

91. FARM SAFETY

We support:

1. Encouraging all county Farm Bureaus to develop and maintain an aggressive farm safety education program to help protect our current and future generations. It is important that youth receive age-appropriate training in farm safety.
2. Working to enhance the safety of farmers by encouraging them to use and, when necessary, replace safety lighting, markings, and reflective devices that are of extreme importance when used on farm machinery.
3. Encouraging the use and placement of reflective material and safety lighting on farm equipment that conforms with the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) marking standards.
4. Encouraging all county Farm Bureaus to work with local farmers, elevators, and emergency response personnel to provide adequate grain safety training. Training should include information pertaining to safe grain handling as well as grain emergencies.

92. FOOD LABELING

We support:

1. Science-based nutrition information on food labels.
2. Concise and easy to understand food labels that provide consumers with information that differentiates safety from quality.
3. Standardizing food date labels including the use of “best used by” or “best if used by or frozen by” to indicate quality and “use by” to indicate safety.
4. Eliminating “sell by” dates on individual packages. “Sell by” dates are intended for grocers as an indicator to rotate stock, not an indicator of quality or safety.
5. A voluntary “Product of the U.S.” label for meat, poultry, and egg products born, raised, harvested, and processed in the U.S.
6. Science-based labeling policies of U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), including no special labeling unless a food is significantly different than its traditional counterpart, or where a specific constituent is altered.
7. Defining “honey” as a thick, sweet, syrupy substance that bees make as food from the nectar of plants or secretions of living parts of plants and store in honeycombs.
8. Labeling of any honey or honey product that is not pure with “blend of sugar and honey,” “blend of honey and corn syrup” or similar combination depending on the ingredients.
9. Standardization of allergen labels for common food allergies.

We oppose:

1. Negative labeling of food products as being derived from the use of biotechnology.
2. Labels that state or imply organic food is superior to non-organic products or that imply negative consequences of consuming non-organic foods over organic products.
3. The use of marketing terms "all natural", “naturally grown,” and "GMO free" as synonyms for "organic" and in lieu of farmer certification as an organic grower.
4. Animal products that are raised in other countries but processed or blended in the USA using the "Product of the USA" label.

Protein Sources

We support:

1. Including information on the percent by weight source of protein (animal or plant-based) on labels.
2. The definition of meat to include only products derived from harvested livestock or poultry.
3. Prohibiting the representation of a product as “meat” when the product is not derived from harvested livestock or poultry.
4. Labels including a prominent statement that the product is “made from plants”, “grown in a lab”, or a comparable disclosure for alternative proteins.
5. Enactment of a labeling law, similar to other nations, that separates different classes of beverages and specifies milk as a product of an animal’s mammary gland.

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

We support:

1. A voluntary, World Trade Organization (WTO) compliant labeling system for identity-preserved agricultural and food products based on a clear and factual farmer self-certification process to ensure the health, safety, and integrity of the product while also enabling the farmer to capture a value-added return.
2. A certification process that is not financially burdensome on farmers.
3. The requirement of COOL for honey to be placed on the front of all packaging in a readable font size.

Enforcement

We support:

1. Vigorous enforcement of FDA food labeling guidelines for domestic and imported products.
2. Enforcement of federal statute that specifies commodities at a farmer’s market must disclose the address of the farm where each product is produced.
3. Strengthening Truth-In-Advertising laws.
4. Providing a clear legal framework to address misleading food label claims across federal agencies.

93. FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT

In its review and implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), as originally intended, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must:

1. Commit to use science, as intended by Congress, in fulfilling the FQPA mandate.
2. Establish a fair and transparent decision-making process.
3. End the practice of using unduly conservative end points, safety factors, and default assumptions.
4. Give higher priority to making scientific decisions rather than completing final tolerance reassessments by statutory deadlines. Sound science requires good data and valid methodologies, which require time to develop.
5. Avoid removing uses that pose theoretical risk based on unreasonable, worst-case assumptions.
6. Abandon the idea of wholesale revocation of tolerances for the organophosphate insecticides.
7. Develop proposed policies and methods for risk allocation and submit them for public notice and comment review.
8. Redress the current resource imbalance between tolerance reassessment and new chemical/new use registration and accelerate the pace of making decisions on new products and uses.
9. In the event of registration cancellation, allow time for pesticide users to make a reasonable transition to alternative products.

94. FOOD SAFETY

We support:

1. Implementing a communications strategy on food safety issues to provide accurate information to the media, to educate the public, and to raise public awareness of the actions farmers are taking to produce a plentiful, high-quality supply of food at fair prices.
2. Measures to improve food inspection and safety through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Inspection Service to assure consumers of a safe food supply. These measures should reinforce consumer confidence while being cost effective.
3. Protection of our food supply by requiring that imported food products be subjected to the same high safety standards and testing as food produced in the United States.
4. Consumer education through labeling regarding safe cooking and storage procedures.
5. National uniformity in pesticide residue standards. Consideration should be given to the benefits of crop protection products.
6. The concept of negligible risk rather than zero tolerance.
7. Cooperative efforts with food processors, chemical companies, governmental agencies, scientists, and others who are responsible for the food supply of our nation to provide factual information on the safety of our food supply.
8. Open communication, not confrontation, with responsible environmental groups.
9. The use of modern technology in the processing and handling of food to assure food safety and promote consumer confidence in the food supply.
10. USDA as the federal agency responsible for food inspection and safety.
11. National (USDA) and state food inspection programs that guarantee adequate inspectors and funding for businesses in both domestic and imported food products.
12. The establishment of a USDA-approval process for state-inspected slaughter and processing plants that allows them to ship interstate.
13. Immediate and longer-term actions by USDA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to raise the priority of, and resources devoted to, federal safety and inspection services, including: the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).
14. The establishment of voluntary guidelines which minimize microbial food safety hazards for fresh fruits and vegetables. The guidelines should:
    A. Be based on science.
    B. Remain generic in nature, not commodity specific, to accommodate the diversity of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry.
    C. Be implemented in a manner that does not impede our ability to export.
15. The use of PFAS free cooking equipment and utensils (i.e., cast-iron pots and pans and stainless-steel utensils).

95. HEALTH CARE

Rural Health Care Quality and Accessibility

We support:

1. Increasing awareness of the health care resources available to rural populations.
2. Providing additional health care resources where needed.
3. Efforts to direct state funding to medical schools to train additional qualified physicians who will practice medicine in rural areas.
4. Residency programs to provide post-graduate physician and primary care training away from major metropolitan-based medical training centers.
5. Programs and incentives to encourage doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals to practice in rural Illinois.
6. The development and implementation of programs to assess rural hospital programs, rural health care facilities, and alternative methods of delivering rural health care.

7. Efforts to develop mobile medical equipment and facilities to bring basic health care services to rural areas of the state.
8. Adequate ambulance service in all rural areas.
9. State regulations to allow the development of limited service hospitals to meet emergency care and other needs where the market will not support a traditional full-service hospital.
10. Legislation that provides exemptions to new state and federal regulations for volunteer fire departments and ambulance services.
11. The maximum possible use of the private sector in providing health care.
12. Exemptions in the two Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) rule to allow rural ambulances to proceed to the scene of an emergency call.
13. Granting continuing education credit to EMTs for their time spent responding to emergency calls.
14. The expansion of the size and scope of the Rural Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program (RNPSP).
15. An increase in state appropriations for programs that allow for recruitment, training, and retention of additional health care professionals to serve rural counties of Illinois. Patient access to Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) in rural and underserved areas.
16. Capital dollars to be invested in rural and tweener hospitals.

We will:

1. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to host or sponsor community forums of interested professional and lay groups to assess rural health care and facilities in their county.
2. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to host or sponsor rural health and awareness activities including making screening and testing available to their members.
3. Continue to support the Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program (RIMSAP) in its efforts to provide medical practitioners for rural communities in Illinois. We encourage expansion of that program to meet the changing health care needs of rural Illinois.
4. Encourage the American Farm Bureau Federation to place a higher priority on its continuing study of the problems of the delivery of health care services in the United States.
5. Support an Agricultural Physicians and Nursing Program that would educate health care professionals in dealing with agricultural accidents and injuries.
6. Work with the Illinois Department of Public Health to reinstate and maintain all levels of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and testing at convenient locations throughout the state as administered prior to the elimination of EMT basic level testing in Illinois. This will ensure that adequate volunteer services can be retained as a Basic Life System (BLS) and minimize additional mandatory training placed on Emergency Medical Technician Basics (EMT-B). Additional unfunded mandates will impose hardships on the rural volunteer emergency ambulance services. The state of Illinois should look at ways to provide funds for any additional mandates.
7. Encourage funding to rural ambulance services to increase their ability to employ additional certified Pre-Hospital Registered Nurse (PHRN), strengthening their rural emergency response and treatment capabilities.
8. Work to establish a unified EMT and Fire Service Training/Cadet program in which high school students who meet the requirements of the State of Illinois and of the program are able to serve in rural areas.
9. Support the concept of providing health insurance through the market place by allowing portability including insuring pre-existing conditions.
10. Seek legislation to allow Illinois associations to offer member health benefit plans.

Farmer Mental Health

We support:

1. Farm Bureau providing education and resources on mental health and stress management to farmer members.
2. Funding and improved delivery of mental health services.

3. Units of government investigating the creation of a community health board under the Community Mental Health Act (CMHA) to lead, contract, and support mental health services in the area.

Payment for Health Care Services

We support:

1. Allowing Medicare recipients to purchase private health care plans that are actuarially equivalent to the current Medicare plan. The plan would receive a payment from Medicare to cover some or all of the costs of the premium.
2. Incentives which could be provided to Medicare recipients to allow them to participate in private or alternative plans.
3. Efforts to eliminate or significantly reduce cost shifting from Medicaid and Medicare to individuals and third-party payers.
4. Privately funded optional care delivery systems such as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO's).
5. Efforts to encourage the medical profession to accept Medicare assignments. Rural and urban hospitals should be reimbursed equally for providing services to Medicare and Medicaid patients.
6. Relaxation of state and federal mandates which require that certain provisions be included in all health insurance policies. Consumers should be given choices as to what provisions are included in their health insurance programs.
7. Further expansion of medical savings accounts that would qualify for a tax credit to allow individuals and their employees to set aside money in anticipation of future health care costs.
8. Removing the caps on the annual maximum contribution amount for all health savings accounts (HSAs).
9. Eliminating the high deductible health plan mandate from HSA eligibility requirements, allowing more individuals to access the health savings plan.
10. Allowing HSA funds to be used for health insurance premiums.
11. Lifting restrictions placed on the use of HSA funds for Over-The-Counter medicines.
12. Consideration of a voluntary regional insurance purchasing cooperative to permit individuals and small companies to receive the same price advantages that corporations receive.
13. Efforts to simplify and make uniform all insurance forms to reduce the cost of processing.
14. Efforts to detect fraud and abuse of Medicare and Medicaid. We encourage swift and vigorous prosecution of those who are found guilty of defrauding these programs.
15. A market-oriented system of health care delivery.

We will seek legislation to allow non-penalty and tax-free transfers from IRAs to health savings accounts for major medical emergencies.

We oppose:

1. Mandated employer-provided health insurance.
2. Any movement to a single-payer health care system.
3. All tax increases to solve the Medicare problem.
4. Any further tightening of Medicare provider reimbursement.
5. Increasing Medicaid eligibility, in an effort to have national health care reform, that would result in increased cost shifting to the states.

Health Care Delivery Cost

We support:

1. Programs to reduce the inflation in health care costs.
2. The development and implementation of programs to provide incentives for consumers to practice wellness and disease prevention.

3. Tort reform to reduce the practice of defensive medicine (i.e., redundant, excessive or unnecessary testing primarily for purposes of liability concerns rather than diagnostic purposes).
4. Every possible effort to affect cost management while providing accessible high-quality health care.
5. State and federal efforts to reduce medical malpractice insurance costs, including limitations on certain punitive and non-economic damage awards, pre-filing mediation boards, and peer review.
6. The use of innovations such as surgical centers or outpatient facilities to allow consumers to opt out of expensive hospital costs when they are unnecessary.
7. The development of an aggressive education-information program for health care consumers to assist them in selecting the most cost-effective health care procedures.
8. Encouragement of regional hospitals to specialize in specific treatment areas with shared access to eliminate unnecessary duplication of equipment and personnel.
9. A periodic review of state regulations and licensing requirements for hospitals and medical professionals to determine the appropriateness of the regulations and licensing requirements in light of changes in the health care delivery system.
10. Efforts to allow consumers to purchase medications that are physician prescribed, as opposed to having to accept a substitute, in order to receive any reimbursement from their insurance carrier.
11. Efforts to encourage and strengthen price transparency in healthcare delivery systems.

96. NUTRITION

We support:
1. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) efforts to expand the use of dietetically wholesome and nutritious foods in all school meals and other nutrition programs.
2. Renaming high fructose corn syrup to corn sugar.
3. Greater flexibility with the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to ensure local school districts are able to determine how to meet the nutritional needs of their students.
4. Equal access of pasteurized dairy products, including whole milk, by the USDA national school lunch program and by the armed forces.
5. The consumption of meat, milk, and eggs as healthy protein sources and a nutritious part of diets.
6. Industry initiatives that promote meat, milk, and eggs and their products as safe and nutritious protein sources.

We oppose:
1. Financial penalties on local school districts for serving meals that do not meet current federal mandates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.
2. The use of any state or federal resources to reduce meat, milk, and egg consumption.
3. Dietary recommendations that promote limiting the consumption of meat, milk, and eggs.

97. POSTAL SERVICE

We support:
1. A reliable, viable postal service.
2. Reasonable access to facilities by rural residents.
3. Timely, expedited delivery of perishable products and animals.

We oppose:
1. Closures of facilities that cause burden to rural residents.
2. Systematic mail delays.

98. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Government Assisted Nutrition Programs

We support:

1. Programs to provide a basic nutrition benefit to individuals based on need.
2. Benefit allotments based on a fair value amount that accounts for the true cost of food, geographical food price variation and time costs for food preparation.
3. Incentives for purchasing fruits and vegetables.
4. Education and incentives for participants to purchase food meeting nutrition dietary guidelines.
5. Increasing the use of third-party and digital platforms for all SNAP approved retailers providing that benefits are not used for service or delivery charges.
6. The acceptance of benefits at Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), farmers markets, food hubs, online grocery stores, and farm stands.
7. Access and funding for charitable food providers to purchase domestically produced United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities for distribution to individuals based on need.
8. Contact by Illinois Health and Human Services staff when nutrition program recipients request a replacement Electronic Benefits (EBT) card more than twice in a 12-month period.
9. Increasing funding for food banks and other food and nutrition assistance programs, cold storage, and distribution costs.
10. Eliminating barriers to access Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits by allowing people who are pursuing education or related job training to qualify for the program.
11. An exemption from Criterion A (staple food stock) and Criterion B (staple food sales) for retailers to the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) retailer rules to allow seasonal and on-farm businesses to accept SNAP benefits.

We oppose public aid programs so lucrative that there is an economic advantage in becoming a recipient.

99. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

We support:

1. Placing rural development as one of our highest priorities.
2. Examining private and government rural development programs to determine their viability and practicality in improving the rural economy and quality of life in Illinois.
3. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program to make loan guarantees to farmer-owned projects sited in urban or urbanizing areas if the locations are the most economically viable to return benefits to the rural owners of the project.
4. Monitoring the impact of the new definition of “Micropolitan Areas” and, if negative economic effects of rural areas are observed, support changes to that definition to better serve rural areas.
5. Developing a comprehensive program for coordinating rural development activities within the state and county Farm Bureau levels.
6. Entrepreneurial programs that promote rural economic development including business incubator programs in rural high schools.
7. Identifying specific rural initiatives which our organization will support during the development of our comprehensive program.
8. Providing county Farm Bureaus advice and guidance on rural development programs.

9. County Farm Bureaus taking a leadership role in rural, community and economic development programs and activities in cooperation with local business, political and agricultural leaders.
10. The federal government fully funding Rural Partners and similar projects. Additional federal funds should be provided to these types of projects which use volunteers instead of government agencies to solve rural problems.
11. Additional USDA Rural Development funding and targeting a greater portion of all funds towards stimulating commerce in rural areas.
12. Increased USDA Rural Development funding for technical and marketing assistance to provide value-added opportunities for farmers.
13. Integrating community services through a single, local economic unit (such as a school) through voluntary local initiatives.
14. A government-based clearinghouse at both the federal and state levels to provide one-stop-shopping for information, coordination of all information regarding government sponsored or aided rural development programs, and information on allied non-governmental programs.
15. Legislation to assist local governments to develop integrated Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
16. Local governments, when considering offering incentives for the purpose of spurring economic development, to:
    A. Balance new-growth incentives against those available to existing businesses;
    B. Make incentives contingent on promised performance;
    C. Carefully examine program costs relative to the increase in economic activity and tax revenue generated by the development.
17. Program development and funding for low-interest loans to assist small business owners in identifying and training a successor who would then purchase the business and continue its operation.
18. Landowners granting easements that improve rural services in areas that need access to better utility services.
19. Multiple sources and increased levels of funding for developing and expanding broadband and cellular network access to rural areas.
20. Studies regarding the quality of life and well-being of rural Illinois residents by the state of Illinois, universities, and similar interest groups.

100. BUSINESS CLIMATE IN ILLINOIS

We support:
1. Moderating the increasing cost of unemployment compensation.
2. Reducing costs involved in providing Worker’s Compensation benefits.
3. Repealing the prevailing wage laws relating to public works projects. Failing to repeal, we will support legislation reducing the burden of the prevailing wage on public bodies outside of major metropolitan areas.
4. Bringing Illinois' minimum wage law in line with federal minimum wage law.
5. Working directly with Illinois’ regulatory agencies to improve their efficiency in issuing the permits for business, economic, and natural resource development projects.
6. Ongoing analyses using state and federal statistics and support reporting of the economic performance of natural-resource-based and mineral-based economies across Illinois' counties.

We oppose:
1. The creation of a state or local tax on any financial transaction, including a tax on any commodity, currency, or securities.
2. Efforts to incorporate into law the doctrine of “comparable worth” as it relates to compensation levels for various types of jobs.

101. COMPENSATION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

We support:

1. Legislation requiring Congress and the Illinois General Assembly to vote by a roll call vote on any legislation that would increase their pay or pension of its members.
2. Pay and pension legislation being voted on separately and not being tied to unrelated legislation.
3. Legislation that would deny all state employment-related benefits to any state employee who is convicted under any federal, state, or local law of theft, embezzlement, or accepting bribes in connection with the employees service as a state employee. We support an amendment to the Illinois Pension Code and/or other current law to the extent necessary to implement this proposed legislation.
4. Capping the pension amount that a state legislator can receive regardless of their length of service or the position(s) they hold with the state after leaving the legislature.
5. Enabling elected local and state officials having access to a 457 plan rather than a taxpayer-funded pension.
6. Requiring public employees to contribute a greater amount to their own pensions.
7. Legislators only receiving compensation for the days they are in office.

102. ELECTIONS

We will actively participate in any legislation and other activities that will involve electoral reforms.

We support:

1. State legislation modifying the present consolidated election law so that the right of secret ballot is protected.
2. Shortening political campaigns by moving primaries closer to general elections, provided county clerks have ample time to prepare for the general election.
3. A limit on campaign spending and franking privileges.
4. Reforming federal campaign laws to include:
    A. A strengthening of campaign spending limitation laws to prevent abuse through the use of “soft money” and independent expenditures.
    B. An increase in the allowable contribution an individual may make to a candidate.
5. Requiring individuals registering to vote, and during voting, presenting government issued photo identification.
6. Consolidating elections in order to streamline the system and reduce taxpayers' expense.
7. Reducing the number of required election judges from five to three for every precinct in counties with a population of 250,000 or less should the local election authority so desire.
8. Greater oversight and enforcement of voter fraud of elections by the Illinois State Board of Elections.
9. Uniform signature requirements, on nominating petitions, regardless of political party for candidates seeking public office.

We oppose:

1. The use of the Internet for voting in any local, state, or federal election.
2. The current Illinois Undervote Notification Law and will support legislation to repeal it.
3. The use of campaign phone calls that are made to households that are on a do-not-call list.
4. Same day voter registration unless the following conditions are met:
    A. All voter registrations done on Election Day take place at a county designated government facility.
    B. A valid photo ID is required at the time of registration.
    C. Full funding of same day voter registration be provided by the State of Illinois to ensure this is not a burdensome unfunded mandate on local governments.

D. Legislation be passed to require uniform statewide standards for the voter registration process.

103. FARM EQUIPMENT

We support:

1. Clarifying and simplifying the vehicle code and regulations relating to farm vehicles.
2. Proper use of the slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblems, retailers providing information regarding proper use and law enforcement agencies enforcing proper use of SMV emblems to be used in accordance with the most current American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) standards.
3. Seeking legislation to increase the fine for the misuse of SMV emblems to at least $75.00 for the first offense.
4. State and county Farm Bureaus developing an SMV and lighting campaign to encourage farmers to update their older equipment with new amber flashing lights and SMV emblems.
5. Development and utilization of standardized specifications for pesticide containers and equipment connectors for closed pesticide application systems.
6. Farm equipment manufacturers and ASABE working together to create an improved system for new equipment that would better indicate turns, utilizing a unique color/style of flashing lights, such as sequentially-flashing red arrows, making them more noticeable for vehicles that are approaching or following.
7. Development and utilization of standardized wire color/function for any trailer licensed for over-the-road use or any towed implement of husbandry.
8. A farm equipment owner's right to maintain, service, repair, and rebuild their vehicle or farming equipment on their own accord or by the repair shop of their choice.

We oppose:

1. Licensing farm tractors and other implements of husbandry.
2. Mandatory retrofitting of lighting on farm equipment beyond that which was required by law as of 2018.

104. FENCE LAW

We support:

1. The equitable cost sharing of division fences between adjoining landowners.
2. Developers and subsequent owners installing and maintaining a new line fence on subdivided property.

105. FIREARM SAFETY

We support:

1. Active promotion of gun safety programs.
2. Repeal of the Firearms Owners Identification Act (FOID).
3. The Firearm Concealed Carry Act issuing permits to carry concealed firearms to qualified Illinois’ citizens through an appropriate application process.
4. Current laws that requires background checks and waiting periods for handgun purchases.

5. Legislation to allow active military personnel residing in Illinois the opportunity to obtain a concealed carry permit without regard to state of residence.
6. The opportunity for school districts to allow school personnel to voluntarily carry a concealed firearm while on duty and on school property.
7. An Illinois State Police endorsed certification/training program for school personnel who are approved by their school district to carry a concealed firearm on school property.
8. Statewide efforts to explore the use of less lethal weapons in addition to lethal weapons in schools and other government institutions where children are usually present.
9. School districts engaging with law enforcement to provide active shooter training programs.
10. Timely processing of Concealed Carry License (CCL) permit applications and renewals that allow for completion within 60 days.
11. The right to protect personal property.
12. Agritourism featuring hunting activities and hunter safety programs for adolescents and adults.

We oppose gun laws that would decrease the ability of law-abiding citizens to protect their property or themselves.

106. ILLINOIS BANKING STRUCTURE

We support:
1. An adequate supply of competitively priced credit for all credit worthy farmers.
2. Competent staff in local banks who understands agriculture and the unique risks with which farmers must deal.
3. Fair competition for banks of all sizes and in all locales.
4. Fair competition with other types of lenders.
5. Economic decision making that is not concentrated in the hands of a few large financial institutions.
6. Constant or a net inflow of capital into the area in which financial institutions are being acquired, merged, or consolidated.
7. Greater scrutiny of an investigation into anti-trust ramifications and violations in relation to mergers and other acquisitions.

107. ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

We support:
1. The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) as a stand-alone agency.
2. Strengthening the IDOA including its role in regulatory concerns as they apply to agriculture.
3. Strengthening Illinois county fairs, the Illinois State Fair, and the DuQuoin State Fair as agricultural expositions.
4. The State of Illinois fully funding its portion of premium dollars at Illinois county fairs.
5. The establishment of a charitable foundation to solicit donations and sponsorships to grow and improve the Illinois State Fair and the DuQuoin State Fair.
6. The IDOA and the State of Illinois putting a five-to-10-year plan in place to move the Illinois State Fair up at least one week.
7. Sufficient meat inspectors on staff so as to be readily available and not hinder the ability of local meat lockers to harvest as needed.

108. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

We support:

1. Expanded use of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act by units of local government.
2. The shared use of buildings, equipment, personnel, and programs by units of local government to reduce the cost to each unit.
3. County Farm Bureaus working with local government officials and other interested parties to encourage local government cooperation.

109. JUDICIAL REFORM

We support:

1. An amendment to the Illinois Constitution permitting downstate judicial districts to choose by referendum between election of judges or appointment of judges from candidates recommended by advisory commissions made up of laymen and lawyers.
2. Working with members of the legal profession and legislative bodies on a state and national level to substantially reform the judicial system by addressing issues such as tort reform, attorney contingency fees, incompetent or unqualified judges, and lengthy trials.
3. Limiting the tenure of judges at the local and state level.
4. Providing adequate information to the public regarding the qualifications of individuals seeking election or retention to judicial office.

110. LAW AND ORDER

We support:

1. Vigorous enforcement of the current driving under the influence laws and legislative efforts to improve those laws.
2. Firm, fair, and prompt enforcement of existing laws.
3. Increased enforcement of existing littering laws.
4. Providing aid to victims of crime.
5. Greater member involvement in recruiting and electing qualified local law enforcement professionals.
6. Requiring that the County Sheriff and State’s Attorney be notified when an inmate from their county is released from a correctional institution.
7. Reducing the fiscal impact imposed on local governments by giving them flexibility to meet minimum federal jail standards.
8. Law enforcement officials seizing vehicles used in the commission of a theft involving agricultural commodities, supplies or equipment.
9. Legislation where needed to prevent the illegal production, importation, manufacture, or distribution of drugs and related drug paraphernalia.
10. Expanding the conditions allowed to be treated with medical cannabis to those proven by medical research to benefit from medical cannabis treatment.
11. Work programs for prisoners.
12. The establishment of Juvenile Justice Councils.
13. Seeking legislation to provide for severe and mandatory sentences for crimes committed with weapons.
14. Clearly defining the legal definition of the defense of one's property.
15. Developing coalitions to address the problems with and education about methamphetamine production and use.
16. The development of an economical additive for anhydrous ammonia to prevent its use for the production of methamphetamine or other illegal purposes.

17. Seeking legislation imposing stiffer penalties for theft of anhydrous ammonia for methamphetamine production.
18. The regulation and taxation of recreational marijuana.

We oppose:
1. The "early release program" as a solution to prison overcrowding.
2. The use, production, and distribution of illegal substances.
3. Giving a "Conservator of Peace" designation or granting similar law enforcement deputization powers to the members of the Illinois General Assembly.

111. LEGISLATIVE BODIES

We support:
1. Legislation prohibiting members of the General Assembly from receiving remuneration from any taxing body for other than incidental services rendered on a part-time basis.
2. Legislation to provide for a “sunset” of all new state or federal rules issued by departments, agencies, executive order or commissions or explicit reauthorization of those rules at "sunset" which spend tax resources.
3. Limiting the Governor's amendatory veto power to only technical corrections and matters of form.
4. A restructuring of the Illinois legislative redistricting process that will be conducted by an unbiased third party, will not be based on political affiliation and prior election results, and districts will be compact, contiguous, and impartial to party or incumbency. Districts should follow county, township, and municipal boundaries as much as possible.
5. An amendment to the Illinois Constitution that addresses limiting the passage of lame duck legislation and requires a 3/5 vote on all legislation in the second year of a General Assembly session after May 31.
6. Creating term limits on both minority and majority leadership positions within the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate.
7. Creating term limits on all statewide offices and state legislators in Illinois.
8. Prohibiting state lawmakers from concurrently serving as an elected official and as a paid lobbyist.
9. Limiting the Governor's power to declare no more than four (4) consecutive states of emergency unless the state of emergency is approved by the legislature or an equally bipartisan legislative body.

112. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

We support:
1. The principle of strong local government.
2. The assignment of responsibility for government services to that unit of general government which best serves the people and can economically provide the service.
3. Maximizing efficiency and eliminating waste in all units of government.
4. Providing uniform requirements, including the printed full name of the voter, for signers of all public petitions.
5. Permitting consolidation of additional county functions between counties.
6. Ensuring that any electronic registry of mortgage loan information shall not affect the current system of recording documents affecting title to real property with the county clerk or recorder.
7. Providing for salaries of all local officials to be set by the appropriate local unit, rather than by the state legislature.

8. Requiring at least 15 percent of registered voters as signers on petitions within any territory proposed to become a new taxing district or within any area proposed to be annexed to an existing taxing district.
9. Requiring that a referendum to expand a taxing district be approved by a majority of voters in both the existing district and in the area proposed to be annexed. When a new taxing district is to be created encompassing both incorporated and unincorporated areas, the referendum should require approval by voters within the incorporated area and a separate approval by voters in the unincorporated area.
10. Extending the time limit from 30 days to 60 days to get the necessary percentage of registered voters' signatures on petitions concerning backdoor referendums.
11. More clearly defining what issues are appropriate for non-binding advisory referenda for units of local government.
12. Prohibiting individuals from serving concurrently as an elected mayor and an elected county board member.
13. Allowing townships with annual revenue less than $850,000, when required to have a CPA audit, to have the audit performed on a cash basis rather than an accrual basis.
14. Providing for the absorption, consolidation, disconnection, and dissolution of units of local government by front door referendum. Only that unit's governing board or registered voters residing within the unit of government should be allowed to initiate the front door referendum.
15. Waiving the residency requirement for the office of Highway Commissioner and road district clerk in a road district if no qualified candidate willing to serve the office exists within the township or road district. All other requirements for the office shall remain.
16. Requiring special purpose units of local government, excluding drainage districts, that go dormant (no projects or expenditures) for more than two years to go before the voters within the district to determine if the unit should continue in existence.
17. Codifying case law dealing with prohibited activities to include serving on a unit of local government board and be an employee of that unit of government.
18. The shifting of additional responsibilities from the federal government to state governments if, at the same time, adequate access is made to the tax structure to allow for the financing of such programs by the states and a commensurate reduction is made in federal taxes. We will support state and local governments in the development of their capabilities to discharge these added responsibilities.
19. The shifting of responsibilities from the state government to local governments only if the state government reduces its taxes proportionately or provides local governments the resources to carry out such responsibilities.
20. State provided training and education for local government officials.
21. Efforts by local government officials, county Farm Bureaus and other organizations to increase public participation in the overall functions of local government.
22. Ensuring that citizens who do not currently live in a library district but wish to receive library services can receive equal and affordable access to the public library system.
23. Encouraging local governments to make compensation breakdowns and pension sweeteners more readily available to public scrutiny.
24. Amending the Cemetery Oversight Act, so that the provisions of the law are not overly burdensome for cemeteries.
25. Elected and appointed government officials being held to ethical standards including prohibiting nepotism.
26. Publishing public notices by alternative local methods when a newspaper is not in general circulation.

We support seeking legislation for:
1. Selection of special district board members by election.
2. Uniform fiscal years, classification of accounts, budgets, and audits for all taxing bodies.
3. Additional authority for forest preserve districts to sell real estate, including farmland.
4. A referendum of registered voters in the township or townships to approve the site where municipalities propose to annex property for the location of any type of waste disposal

facility, prison or other entity which could directly affect the lives of people residing in the area.

5. The requirement that any municipality or any other unit of local government considering annexation of farmland notify affected landowners by registered or certified mail at least 30 days prior to the filing of such annexation.
6. The capability of counties, townships, and special districts to levy impact fees to support local services during the time between construction of a project and when tax revenues would normally be received and to levy impact fees to support local infrastructure improvements in areas of new development.
7. The elimination of the liability of bonded indebtedness to areas that are annexed and then vote by referendum to disconnect from a taxing district which had previously incurred debt before the annexation. The annexed and then disconnected territory would only be liable for indebtedness occurring while they are a part of the district.

We oppose:

1. All efforts to mandate inclusion of areas not currently served by a library district into existing library districts.
2. Exposing an individual's personal financial information as a requirement to serve as a local official, except in the case of a financial conflict of interest.

113. STATE AND FEDERAL MANDATES

We support amending the Illinois Constitution to prohibit the state from mandating programs on either local government or school districts without providing full state funding.

We oppose any state or federal legislation mandating local programs unless full funding for such programs is provided annually.

114. PRIVATE LANDS COOPERATIVE INITIATIVE

We support development of state laws and policies promoting voluntary and incentive-based private land initiatives to:

1. Encourage economic stability in communities through long-term private land ownership.
2. Enhance on-farm income through recreation-based resource development.
3. Increase community revenue through expanded economic activity.
4. Improve owner-sanctioned public recreational opportunities on private land.
5. Provide liability protection to landowners.
6. Increase economic activity in depressed rural communities.
7. Promote cooperation between government bodies and private landowners.

115. PROBATE AND FAMILY LAWS

We support:

1. Major reform of probate laws and procedures which will increase the promptness, reduce the cost, and simplify the procedures for settling estates.
2. Revisions to family law that fairly recognize capital cost for purposes of determining net farm income and include allowances for deduction of either depreciation or debt service.

116. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

We support:

1. Efforts to inform our leaders and members of the basic provisions of the current public employee collective bargaining laws in Illinois.
2. Urging the use of various innovative consensus and non-adversarial approaches to resolve public employee disputes in order to minimize the potential of work stoppages by public employees.
3. Cooperation with major public employee and employer groups in the State in pursuit of reasonable solutions to disputes in the public sector.
4. Binding arbitration only when agreed to by both negotiating parties.

We oppose:

1. Mandatory membership in any bargaining group, or mandatory financial support of such group by non-members.
2. Strikes by public employees which might jeopardize public health, safety, welfare and education.
3. Inclusion of administrative, supervisory or management personnel in a collective bargaining unit.

117. SPECIAL SERVICE AREAS

We support:

1. Seeking amendments to the Special Service Area Law to permit, by petition of at least 10 percent of the voters in the proposed area, the calling of a binding referendum to determine if a special service area shall be established, if taxes are to be extended, or if certain areas are to be included in the service area.
2. Ensuring that special service areas be restricted to providing those services that are not ordinarily provided by county government.
3. Procedures for the dissolution of special service areas.
4. Only counties being able to establish and govern any special service area which includes territory not incorporated within a municipality.

118. TORT REFORM AND INSURANCE LIABILITY

We support:

1. Coordination of efforts between state and county Farm Bureaus, medical associations, insurance organizations, and other organizations for solving the increasing problems of cost and availability of liability insurance.
2. Efforts to reduce the costs of product liability insurance and other important classes of liability insurance.
3. Legislation to help protect landowners and tenants from liability claims made by trespassers, licensees, or invitees coming upon the landowners' property and legislation to ensure landowners and tenants owe no duty of care to trespassers, regardless of age.
4. Legislation that will protect the private landowner from liability claims arising from conditions or risks created by storms or other natural disasters.
5. Legislation that will protect businesses that make a reasonable effort to comply with applicable federal and state regulations from liability claims made by employees and customers related to the Coronavirus or other similar pandemics.
6. Limitations upon an attorney's contingency fee.
7. Modification of the law on joint and several liability and comparative negligence to prevent inequitable division of compensation from defendants.

8. Removal of the authority of local units of government to use profits generated from tax-created liability protection funds for other purposes.
9. Development of informational programs to educate our membership and the public regarding issues relating to tort reform and the insurance liability crisis.
10. Laws or regulations absolving farmers from liability claims of environmental pollution:
    A. When complying with federal or state approved label instructions.
    B. When building, managing, or operating livestock facilities according to federal or state guidelines such as the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) and the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) rules.
11. Legislation at the state and federal level to place reasonable limitations on attorney's fees generated by class action lawsuits.
12. Efforts to limit punitive damages in odor lawsuits.
13. An amendment to the Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act in order to limit the liability of landowners who voluntarily open their land for educational and recreational activities at no charge while maintaining the landowner’s ability to determine who to allow on their property.
14. Legislation that would encourage liability litigation to be filed and commenced in the jurisdiction where the medical service was provided.
15. The expansion of the restitution language that will allow the recovery of both out-of-pocket expenses and lost wages.
16. Requiring the cost of defense to be paid by the complaining or suing parties and their representatives in the event the defendant prevails.
17. Seeking to require the payments by the plaintiff or plaintiffs of costs and reasonable attorney fees incurred by a prevailing defendant in any nuisance action in which a proposed farm (as defined in the Farm Nuisance Suit Act) or expansion of an existing farm which is alleged to be a nuisance.
18. Legislation to minimize the liability of farm equipment drivers and/or owners when Illinois Department of Transportation design standards force their equipment to travel across the center line of a highway.
19. At the state level - and will urge the American Farm Bureau Federation to support at the federal level - a "Voluntarism Protection Act" to grant immunity from personal civil liability under certain circumstances to volunteers, officers and directors working on behalf of non-profits, charitable organizations or government.

119. TRESPASS, VANDALISM, AND PRIVATE LAND ACCESS

We support:

1. Encouraging courts to punish vandals by requiring them to clean up and repair their own vandalism at their own expense or perform some other constructive work. We urge judges, when setting sentences, to require reimbursement of Crime Stoppers or similar reward programs, as a part of the sentence.
2. Legislation to protect landowners and tenants from property seizures, claims, and costs caused by unauthorized activities of trespassers and licensees entering upon and using the landowners’ property.
3. Efforts, including legislation and working with law enforcement agencies and prosecutors, to increase the enforcement of criminal trespass laws.
4. Legislation specifying that, in criminal damage to property cases where the damage was caused by the unauthorized operation of a vehicle on private property, the threshold of felony status be elevated to a level suited to the crime and one that would help to remove the law enforcement community’s hesitancy to prosecute those violators. In such cases, a minimum fine should be established with required restitution to the victim for property damages caused and the violator’s driver's license should be suspended for six months.

5. Legislation linking criminal violations of the Illinois Vehicle Code and acts of criminal trespass or criminal damage to property to the driver's license record of anyone convicted of these crimes for the unauthorized operation of a motor vehicle on private property.
6. Legislation creating an owner responsibility provision in law that obligates the owner of a vehicle to compensate for damages caused to private property by the use of the vehicle on that property without the landowner's authorization unless the vehicle was stolen or the vehicle's owner took reasonable precautions against misuse of the vehicle.
7. Efforts to educate law enforcement officials and the general public - especially youth - about the property damage caused by the unauthorized operation of vehicles on private property and the liability and penalties for any resulting property damage.
8. The development and dissemination of programs and materials on private property rights and the associated portions of trespass and criminal law. We encourage county Farm Bureaus to pursue similar efforts on the local level.
9. Efforts to educate farmland owners and farmland operators about their legal rights and responsibilities relating to trespass; also, efforts to educate them about insurance coverage relating to liability and property damage caused through trespass. We encourage county Farm Bureaus to pursue similar efforts on the local level.
10. Efforts to establish riding areas for ATVs and other off-highway vehicles and efforts to generate revenues for that purpose from those who use the vehicles for recreation.
11. Efforts to make it clear that persons going to or from rivers, streams, and bike trails over another's land or hunting on another's land without the owner's or rightful occupant's specific permission, without regard to the presence of any posted notices, are trespassers for the purposes of determining liability of a landowner for any injury which might occur to the trespasser.
12. Legislation that will require owners of recreational trails and their facilities to compensate owners of land adjacent to the trail or facility for any property damage, theft, littering, and/or vandalism caused by users of the trail or facility except where the actual perpetrator can be identified and make restitution.
13. Efforts to educate farm owners and operators about their legal rights as they pertain to utilities and governmental or private surveying companies. We would encourage all surveyors to notify affected landowners and use public property whenever possible.
14. Efforts to educate farm owners and farmers about their legal rights as landlords or managers of residential properties.
15. Landowners being an additional named insured for all government and public utility project work that is being done on private property.
16. Efforts to enforce regulations on hot air balloons regarding their potential trespass on private property and their potential for endangering livestock.
17. A program to reward informants who provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons who commit theft, arson, or vandalism to the property or premises of Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA) members.
18. Requiring sky diving companies to install tracking devices on the parachutes and other components that can become unattached during flight; notification to landowners and/or tenants of a lost parachute or parts of a parachute, or damage to crops or property caused by a skydive; skydive companies compensating the farmer for damages caused by skydivers landing on their property, ruining crops, or damage to farm equipment caused by parachutes and their parts.

120. FEDERAL ESTATE TAXES

We support:

1. Permanently repealing federal estate taxes while retaining a stepped-up basis at the time of inheritance.
2. Federal estate tax exemptions for heirs who actively farm land that is restricted by a voluntary conservation easement.

3. Eliminating the ceiling and limitation on the percentage of an estate's total value allowed in determining the existing exemption under Internal Revenue Code 2032-A for agricultural productive value.
4. Increasing the maximum gift tax exclusion per recipient to $50,000 per year.

We oppose any reduction in the current federal estate tax exemption. Until repeal, we support inflation-adjusted increases in the exemption to ease the movement of farms and small businesses from one generation to the next.

121. PROPERTY TAX ADMINISTRATION

We support:

1. Provisions to specifically define property as real estate or personal property on an equitable basis statewide. We will continue to work with the State Department of Revenue (DOR) and local assessing officials on specific problems in this regard.
2. A change in the method of valuing mobile or manufactured homes for assessment and collection of taxes from the Mobile Home Local Services Tax Act (privilege tax) to an Ad Valorem Tax (measured by value).
3. Reduction of costs for property assessment publications by allowing counties to utilize online publication in lieu of printed publication. This type of publication would be in addition to the required individual property assessment mailings to property owners.
4. Allowing counties to eliminate the office of Township Assessor by a county-wide referendum in which a majority of voters in the county and a majority of voters in the majority of townships approve.
5. Allowing by local referenda the dissolution of multi-township assessing districts.
6. Seeking uniform and equitable implementation of the Farmland Assessment Law, in cooperation with county Farm Bureaus.
7. Working with county Farm Bureaus to inform members of the limits of their responsibilities in providing information to assessing officials.
8. Cooperating with the DOR and the Association of Assessing Officials in developing educational materials for use by taxpayer groups.
9. Urging the members of the Illinois General Assembly not to change the present formula for calculating the assessed value of farmland.
10. Appointment of Supervisors of Assessment versus elected Supervisors of Assessment.
11. Working with the IDOR and the Illinois Association of Assessing Officials on a program to identify, incentivize, and train new assessors who can be deployed to assist with reducing the backlog of reassessments and updates to property assessment records.
12. Encouraging county Farm Bureaus, in cooperation with local officials, to periodically hold information/education meetings for taxpayers.
13. Working with the DOR and the Association of Assessing Officials to achieve uniformity in depreciation (for assessment purposes) of all depreciable agricultural facilities.
14. Working with the Illinois DOR and the Association of Assessing Officials to encourage the assessment of all qualifying agricultural property, regardless of size, under the farmland assessment law.
15. Working with appropriate state agencies and other state officials to develop Conservation Management Plan rules that permit landowners to apply for a plan without submitting overly burdensome and prohibitive proposals.

We oppose legislation removing either the State DOR or the local Board of Review from the administrative process of approving or denying property tax exemptions. The DOR should continue to have final authority.

122. SALES TAX

We support:

1. Seeking removal of the Retailer's Occupation Tax (ROT) and the Use Tax from sales of LP gas used primarily in production agriculture.
2. Seeking removal of the ROT and the Use Tax from sales of feeds, including hay when sold by farmers to feed livestock including horses and poultry for marketing, or for producing dairy products or eggs or other consumer by-products.
3. Seeking elimination of the practice of charging state sales tax on motor fuel.
4. Agricultural exemptions in Illinois state sales tax codes.

123. STATE AND LOCAL FINANCE

We will analyze any proposed changes in state tax rates as to the effect any change would have on the economy and competitiveness of the State of Illinois in relation to the state tax rates imposed by neighboring states and take the appropriate action on such proposed changes.

We support:

1. An overall tax structure for state and local governments in Illinois that includes a moderate flat rate state income tax, a moderate local real property tax, sales tax, motor fuel tax, cigarette tax, liquor tax, and other special taxes.
2. The need to analyze any proposed change to the state tax structure as to the effect it would have on the economy and competitiveness of the State of Illinois.
3. Providing property tax relief through a combination of state revenue surpluses and various statewide taxes.
4. Including townships and road districts along with counties and municipalities in the formula for the distribution of the Local Government Distributive Fund.
5. Extending to two years the time landowners have to disconnect their property from any special purpose taxing district formed or expanded without a referendum and which does not provide emergency life-sustaining services. During that period, all property tax revenues collected by the district from landowners within the new taxing area should be held in escrow and refunded or credited to those taxpayers if they choose, by referendum, to disconnect.
6. Extending the time limit from 30 days to 60 days to get 10 percent of registered voters' signatures on petitions concerning backdoor referendums.
7. Providing for restricted and specific criteria in order to qualify areas for creation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts by municipalities and counties in order to reduce negative fiscal impacts on existing businesses and local governments, including schools. Further, we believe the economic advantages of the new business or production alone should be enough to justify expansion or location in an area.
8. Limiting the tort immunity levies to the actual costs incurred by the local taxing bodies. We support vigorous enforcement of current laws and regulations specifying use of these funds.
9. Allowing local citizens to establish a maximum tax rate lower than the statutory maximum rate when creating a new taxing district by referendum.
10. Requiring a referendum ballot question which proposes the creation of a new taxing body also state the statutory maximum tax rate and debt level for the proposed new taxing district.
11. Allowing a Fire Protection District to retain the real estate taxes for a period of 10 years, whenever a territory is disconnected from a Fire Protection District and annexed to a municipality.
12. Taxing districts shall give public notice of, and hold a public hearing on, their intent to annex property.

13. Limiting taxing districts, including school districts, from incurring future bonded indebtedness, without a referendum, where such bonds are to be repaid with property tax revenue.
14. Requiring referendums which authorize any new real estate tax levy to state the maximum statutory tax rate in the referendum question.
15. Allowing all taxing bodies to reduce their levy after the levy has been submitted to the county clerk.
16. Allowing impact fees to be imposed on new residential construction for school capital needs.
17. Allowing townships that are currently under the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) program to opt out.
18. Exempting undeveloped farmland in unincorporated areas from municipal local improvement taxes and fees.
19. Requiring that any tax credits be based on fiscal policy that promotes long-term economic stability and prosperity.
20. Amending the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Act to allow some of the revenues funding the act to be used to provide maintenance and improvement to existing state parks.
21. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to require school districts to issue a public statement of intent a minimum of 30 days prior to the election.
22. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to ensure that counties benefiting from the School Facility Tax Act would not be prevented from, or placed at a disadvantage for, receiving school construction dollars from the state.
23. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to require that a portion of the money collected is used in property tax relief if the school district(s) has outstanding bonds for capital purposes.
24. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to require a sunset clause of 20 years or re-approval by voters to continue the tax.
25. Requiring local governments to publicly disclose information on TIF districts including the locations of the districts, funds generated, use of funds, and any contractors.
26. A more stringent audit of all state expenditures.
27. Eliminating the Illinois estate tax, but until that is accomplished, support using the corresponding federal exclusion amount, but not less than $5 million and having a tax rate structure no greater than the maximum 16 percent currently in law.
28. Imposing a tax on the owner or lessee of non-renewable natural resources, excluding oil and gas, upon the severance and production of that resource. A significant portion of the tax revenue shall be distributed to the county of origin.
29. Maintaining and creating property assessment levels that encourage the creation and use of grassed-backed terraces, grassed waterways, filter strips, two stage ditches, bioreactors, and other approaches to improve water quality through these practices.
30. Creating state income tax deductions and credits benefiting agriculture and agricultural processes.
31. Maintaining a state income tax general exemption at some realistic level.
32. Coupling the state income tax to Federal Depreciation rules regarding bonus depreciation.
33. Changing the backdoor referendum to a front door referendum in the library code that relates to annexation of contiguous territory.
34. Legislation further limiting the use of the Illinois Building Authority Act and the Illinois Public Building Commission Act.
35. Working to form a coalition of statewide associations and other interested and like-minded parties to work for tax reform to reduce the reliance on real estate taxes.
36. Urging county Farm Bureaus to implement comprehensive local programs to determine and to critically evaluate how and from what sources local government revenues are being raised and how these funds are being spent. We will assist county Farm Bureaus in such programs.
37. Encouraging the Illinois General Assembly to undergo a more comprehensive and diligent method of prioritizing appropriations to meet the current needs of its citizens.

38. Speeding up tax appeal decisions that affect local government budgets.

We oppose:

1. Imposing additional taxes or increases in tax rates upon property unless approved by a referendum of local voters at a primary or general election. We oppose the use of a backdoor referendum.
2. Imposing a state property tax.
3. Increasing exemptions from real estate taxation.
4. The use of (TIF) or enterprise zones for production agriculture.
5. Authorizing non-refundable fund transfers beyond those allowed in the standard budgeting process or via voter approval.
6. Creating a gross receipts tax or value-added tax by the State of Illinois.
7. Selling or leasing the Illinois State Lottery.
8. Authorizing the transfer of funds from dedicated and special state funds for any reason beyond their original intended purpose.
9. Enacting a quarter-cent sales tax on purchases throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, as defined by the counties in the Regional Transportation Authority Service area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties).
10. A severance tax on current, low production oil and gas wells. We believe that if there is a severance tax on new, high-capacity oil and gas wells it should be at a level that will not impede the development or operation of those wells.
11. A constitutional amendment to remove or permit removal of the present 8 to 5 state income tax ratio between corporations and individuals.
12. Rolling preexisting TIF parcels into a newly created TIF District or extending the life of the TIF Districts.
13. Extension of real estate taxes on farmland by special taxing districts which provide non-essential services such as library districts, park districts, and forest preserve districts.
14. The creation of a progressive or graduated state income tax rate structure.

124. TAX REFORM

Higher federal marginal income tax rates are inconsistent with economic growth and lower interest rates. We support continued retention of the indexing of income taxes.

We seek:

1. A reasonable Investment Tax Credit program and provision for the use of all carryover investment tax credits.
2. Immediate provisions to allow individuals who purchase their own health insurance an exemption or deduction for health insurance costs.
3. Further reductions in capital gains tax and/or indexing capital gains tax for inflation.
4. Establishment of a “Farmer Savings Plan” (FSP) that allows for an allocation of income into a tax exempt FSP for emergencies. Plan contributions should include earnings and gains from a farm operation’s proceeds and capital items. Contributions should be tax deductible at the time of contribution and be taxed at the time of distribution.
5. An exemption allowing the cash rental of farmland to a family partnership or corporation without the 15.3 percent self-employment tax on the rents.
6. A modification of federal tax code 1031 like-kind exchanges that:
   A. Relaxes the requirements on the reinvestment of the proceeds from agricultural land sales.
   B. Changes from 45 days to six months the time allowed to identify a non-taxable exchange, and from six months to one year the time allowed to close and receive property.
7. Tax incentives for persons who sell or lease property, including but not limited to land, machinery, and other farm assets to beginning farmers.

8. Legislation which eliminates self-employment tax on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments.

We support:

1. The repeal of the amendments made to the 1099 IRS reporting in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Farmland taken through eminent domain, or as a result of the threat of eminent domain, which has been owned by the current owner or their immediate family for 10 or more consecutive years should be exempt from capital gains taxes on that property.
2. The investigation and complete study of a federal flat rate income tax proposal to show its possible long-term effects on production agriculture.
3. The extension of the Federal Bonus Depreciation component of the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002.
4. The unrestricted use of cash accounting regardless of the level of gross receipts of the primary farm or the cumulative gross receipts of all businesses related to the primary farm.
5. Retirement contributions beginning at age 55 being treated as a deductible expense (similar to repair or seed expenses).

We oppose:

1. Any tax and/or government-imposed user fee on commodity futures or options transactions.
2. The concept of a Wealth Tax.

125. TRANSPORTATION

We support:

1. Development of a long-range national transportation policy.
2. A system serving the needs of both passengers and freight across the country.
3. Exploration of public-private partnerships.
4. Developing economical and energy efficient methods of meeting future transportation needs and global competitiveness.

Land Use

We support:

1. Regulations which:
   - A. Provide improved noxious weed and brush control by state and local road authorities on the full width of highway rights-of-way.
   - B. Maintain safe levels of visibility.
   - C. Protect farmers' crops from unwarranted or careless spraying.
   - D. Ensure that ditch and roadside vegetation maintenance practices do not impair drainage to or from adjoining farm fields.
   - E. Preserve vegetative cover adequate to prevent soil erosion on roadsides and in ditches.
2. Enforcement of noxious weed and brush control by railroad authorities on railroad rights-of-way, including the use of a soil conserving cover crop whether the railroad is in operation or abandoned.
3. Giving counties the power to levy a fine of $500 per acre of railroad rights-of-way where noxious weeds are not eradicated or controlled.
4. Enforcement of drainage laws and regulations on railroad rights-of-way.
5. Oversight of railroad construction projects and design standards by appropriate government agencies to minimize disturbance to adjoining farmland and farming operations and to adequately protect or repair drainage and drainage systems.
6. Efforts to ensure that highway construction and improvement projects do not cause serious, adverse impact to drainage nor cause erosion on adjacent land.

7. Utilization of marginal farmland or poorer grades of land for new railroad or highway construction projects where feasible in order to preserve tillable farmland.
8. Utilization of existing rights-of-way for new highways to the maximum extent feasible in order to minimize acquisition of new lands for highway purposes.
9. Equitable compensation to landowners for disruption of farming operations by highway construction.

Other

We support:

1. Efficient mass transportation. We will support legislation or regulations to allow disconnection of counties by referendum from mass transportation authorities.
2. Use of biodiesel and ethanol by mass transit systems.
3. Efforts to streamline the transportation project delivery process to reduce unnecessary time delays including:
   A. Simplifying the environmental process for projects with few impacts.
   B. Involving appropriate reviewing agencies early in the process to help expedite overall project schedules.
   C. Requiring greater coordination among federal reviewing agencies and setting time limits for their review.
   D. Use of the Design-Build project delivery method or other innovative construction strategies.
4. Efforts to educate policy makers and the public to ensure they understand:
   A. The value and necessity of efficient and effective transportation infrastructure.
   B. The complexity and cost of both long-term maintenance and expansion of transportation infrastructure to meet future needs.
   C. The importance of interconnectivity between modes.
   D. Requiring construction projects to be completed as timely and safely as possible, minimizing impacts on the traveling public.
5. The removal of concrete bridges on township roads with less than 20 feet clearance widths and banister heights taller than 18 inches from the register of historic places so they can be replaced with a new bridge that allows modern farm implements to easily pass over them.

126. TRANSPORTATION -- HIGHWAYS

Finance

We support:

1. Legislation which provides that user fees such as motor fuel taxes, licensing and registration fees are the basic means for funding highway transportation systems in Illinois at both state and local levels.
2. Maintaining the existing state Motor Fuel Tax Distribution formula.
3. Legislation collecting road user fees from hybrid, alternative fuel and electric highway vehicles.
4. Legislation to increase the share of state-collected highway user fees allocated to units of local government for road and bridge construction and maintenance needs.
5. Legislation increasing the state's township bridge program fund to at least $30 million annually.
6. Legislation providing for a more equitable formula for allocating motor fuel tax funds to counties based on both vehicle registration and road mileage.
7. Use of all highway user fees including that part of motor fuel tax funds derived from highway use solely for construction and maintenance of roads, streets, and bridges.
8. Legislation permitting establishment of transportation impact districts by road districts and counties.

9. Repeal of Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) requirements stipulating that contractors must have federally approved apprenticeship and training programs to be considered a responsible bidder for road projects.
10. Legislation to prevent the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority from constructing any new toll highways or extending any existing toll highways unless state law is changed to allow for strict accountability to the Illinois General Assembly.
11. Seeking legislation that holds the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority accountable and responsible for the repair and maintenance of all overpass decks that are the result of tollway construction.

We believe Illinois highways currently funded by tolls should remain as toll roads.

We oppose:
1. The creation of a Statewide Vehicle Mileage Tax (VMT) which would tax citizens based upon the number of miles driven annually.
2. Legislation which would abolish motor fuel tax refunds for non-highway use.
3. Mandatory bike paths on rural roads without adequate state funding.
4. The sale or lease of any Illinois highway system.
5. Formation of any new toll highway authority in Illinois unless existing state law is changed to allow for strict accountability to the Illinois General Assembly.

Infrastructure

We support:
1. Proper administrative authorities in the development of standards for the construction of local roads and bridges that correspond with the physical needs of the highway system and the economic ability of local authorities to pay for them.
2. The use of weight limit postings and associated permits only for the purpose of protecting the physical integrity of the road.
3. Legislation requiring weight limit postings intended to protect roadway surfaces during the spring thaw timeframe be based on a per-axle limit rather than on a gross vehicle weight limit.
4. Legislation granting vehicles hauling agricultural commodities from the field to the first point of delivery, an additional axle weight tolerance. That tolerance should match what is allowed by the state statute pertaining to the harvest season permit, but without the need for a written permit.
5. Greater emphasis on roadway improvements and maintenance of existing state highways while incorporating new construction technologies, with reduced emphasis on new expressways and interstates.
6. An approach to funding the replacement and/or maintenance of roads and bridges by the IDOT through improved consultation with the local highway officials and the public as to the necessity of each project considered.
7. Requiring improvements to major highways be designed to a higher standard providing for significantly longer life before repairs are needed.
8. The revision of IDOT design standards on state highways to consider the size of modern farm equipment.

We oppose:
1. The use of roundabouts or other traffic control devices that would restrict, impede, or otherwise prevent the safe and efficient passage of modern farm equipment.
2. The use of a private permit process to allow a major intersection redesign on a state highway without public input.

Access

We support:
1. Legislation that would ensure the continuity of local collector road systems by requiring those routes be continuous, regardless of jurisdiction, between logical beginning and

ending points such as county or state highways or major traffic generating facilities, or that a reasonable, viable alternate route be made available.

2. Funding to assist in upgrading highways that retain business traffic through rural communities (where locally desired) while improving safety and traffic flow.
3. Requiring all road authorities that seek to make any change to an existing road, that will result in establishment of a lower weight limit, to develop a plan for ingress and egress to existing livestock and other agricultural facilities that have an established access to that roadway. The plan must be functional, economically feasible, and reasonable with agreement by both the road jurisdiction authorities and property owners/shippers along the route.
4. Seeking to allow local jurisdictions, at their discretion, to permit the movement of vehicles hauling for production agriculture which exceed size or weight limits on posted roads where necessity dictates the need for the shipment to or from a specified farm.
5. Seeking to require a unanimous decision to permanently post a reduced weight limit or close a road district road be shared equally with the highway commissioner, the county engineer and a majority of the elected board members associated with that road district.
6. Requiring the highway authority to provide written explanation if the highway authority denies a road access request of a landowner.
7. The establishment of a process for landowners to appeal a decision of a highway authority.

Other

We support:

1. Legislation permitting temporary signs within a reasonable distance of federal and state highways, other than interstates, directing traffic to seasonal farm produce outlets.
2. Legislation establishing an adopt-a-highway program for rural sections of all roads in the state.
3. Programs that encourage maintenance officials to offer landowners/land managers/operators the chance to accept or refuse soil removed from adjacent road ditches.
4. Modification of highway standards by state and local highway officials to provide farm and field entrances that accommodate the needs of modern agriculture. This includes encouraging state, county, and township highway departments to use a plastic, bendable marker post instead of metal posts where object markers are used.

127. TRANSPORTATION -- RAILWAYS

Finance

We support:

1. Strengthening of existing state laws so the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) can deal effectively with unfair rent increases imposed by railroads upon their tenants, and unrealistic sale prices for land offered by the railroads to tenants or other prospective buyers of railroad property.
2. Legislation requiring full disclosure of the railroad grain transportation bidding process to the individuals who participate in the process after all bids have been made and rail cars have been allocated.

We oppose diversion of railroad earnings to holding companies or non-railroad businesses at the expense of maintaining a viable railroad.

Infrastructure

We support:

1. Efforts to have more at-grade highway/railroad crossings signalized with warning lights and gates.
    A. Where closure of the crossing would impose undue hardships on users of the road, greater flexibility should be shown by the ICC on safety considerations.
    B. Efforts should be made to ensure that the ICC considers accident history and emergency access along with other locally important issues in decisions on petitions to close railroad crossings.
2. Protocols that maintain public safety by requiring railroads to give a minimum of two weeks advance notice of construction intentions to local residents and local government bodies prior to taking formal action on permit applications and prior to temporary railroad crossing closures.

We oppose parallel branch line mergers of rail systems and the granting of railroad abandonments which tend to lessen overall transportation competition or where there is or could be proven traffic potential.

Land Use

We support legislation and regulations to provide that in the case of a railroad abandonment, the current owner of the tract of land from which the railroad right-of-way was obtained be given the right of first refusal for such land, including mineral rights, based upon the fair market value for comparable property rights in the area. If the current owner fails to exercise such option, the adjacent landowners will be offered the next right of refusal.

Access

We support:

1. Expedient placement of "exempt" postings at public road crossings on railroads which are abandoned.
2. A requirement that a notice of proposed crossing closure be posted at crossings 30 days in advance of a hearing to consider closure of the crossing.
3. The prompt communication, assessment of damages, cleanup and processing of claims incurred by both private landowners and units of local government following a train derailment.
4. Oversight by the ICC of median barriers and crossing safety devices placed in the approach to grade crossings which prohibit and/or hinder the flow of agricultural equipment through grade crossings.
5. Legislation that will allow the Surface Transportation Board, on petition of a state, to declare all or part of a state to be an area of inadequate rail competition, with special rail customer remedies that would apply in such areas.

Other

We support:

1. Giving authority to the state to force a railroad to temporarily cease operations on a given stretch of track due to emergency conditions.
2. Maintaining state oversight of railroads under the purview of the ICC.
3. Working with the railroad industry and the ICC to establish regulations that require parked trains to maintain a 500-foot distance from ungated and/or unsignaled at-grade crossings in unincorporated areas to provide safe visibility for motorists. Trains parked at businesses should be exempt from this requirement when it is necessary while loading or unloading, but still maintain the maximum setback distance possible.
4. Meeting with railroad officials to determine ways to improve rail service to agriculture across Illinois.
5. Encouraging rail passenger services to maintain or improve service and increase efforts to become self-sufficient.

We oppose the implementation of high-speed rail projects unless the following conditions are included:

1. Safe and convenient public access is provided across the railroad.
2. Owners of private crossings are provided continued access.
3. Landowners are fairly compensated for any takings associated with the project.

128. TRANSPORTATION -- VEHICLE REGULATIONS

Vehicles

We support:

1. Redefinition of "commercial motor vehicle" from the 10,001-pound threshold to that used for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program - 26,001 pounds.
2. Legislation to reduce the requirement for semi-annual truck safety inspections to an annual inspection.
3. Legislation to require recreational motor vehicles and recreational trailers to pass a safety inspection on the same basis as trucks and trailers.
4. Legislation permitting second division vehicles with expired safety test decals to be driven to a repair facility and to a safety test lane.
5. Efforts to develop regulations which encourage the establishment of more truck safety test lanes in the state.
6. Legislation that would allow annual reporting of mileage-on-mileage plates.
7. Efforts to allow low-mileage operations to pay a flat annual fee in lieu of submitting quarterly reports as a means of complying with the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA).
8. Legislation to remove the requirement to post a bond to purchase a mileage plate.
9. Proration of renewal fees for farm truck and trailer plates based on the month of application.
10. Legislation establishing uniform maximum weights for all truck and trailer license plate classifications that share the same letter designation.
11. Regulation establishing uniform release mechanisms on all seat belts on newly manufactured vehicles.
12. Programs and actions that encourage the inclusion of automatic Daytime Running Lights/Lamps (DRLs) and automatic headlights on newly manufactured vehicles.
13. Legislation to expand the applicability of the harvest season permit to include perishable produce.
14. Legislation to establish higher weight limits for farm wagons and non-licensed trailers.
15. Seeking to require that trailers submit to safety test inspections at the same weight classification as required for trucks.
16. Seeking to establish a low mileage license for trucks with a reduced number of allowable miles and a commensurate reduction in fee.
17. Seeking to increase the number of farm truck plates available, while maintaining a discounted rate on multiple farm plates.
18. Seeking to require all rural mail delivery vehicles to have flashing yellow lights on top of the vehicle and a sign on the rear of the vehicle reading "U.S. Postal Service Mail Carrier."
19. Seeking to establish uniform truck and trailer lengths on Class III routes, other state highways, local roads, and streets.
20. Seeking to change federal regulations to keep written warnings from appearing on Compliance, Safety, and Accountability (CSA) reports.
21. Standardization of Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Illinois regulations to exempt from hazardous material requirements the transportation of 1,000 gallons or less of diesel fuel by farmers.

Drivers

We support:

1. Enhanced driver education related to "Sharing the Road" with farm equipment, slow moving vehicles, large trucks, horses, and horse drawn vehicles.
2. Limiting the need for bi-annual Department of Transportation (DOT) driver physicals to only those drivers required to have a CDL.
3. A policy change within law enforcement agencies whereby officers will direct trucks to a nearby safe area to conduct their inspection, thus avoiding closure of a traffic lane for that purpose.
4. Drivers being allowed to make minor adjustments and/or repairs during a roadside inspection and at weigh stations to avoid any down time and costly unnecessary service calls.
5. Allowing a CDL applicant to have a checklist with them during the pre-trip inspection portion of the CDL testing process.
6. Allowing applicants for a Class A license with J50 or J51 restriction to have their driving skills evaluation based only on actual situations they face in normal farm semi operations.

We oppose the federal regulation requiring that state-licensed physicians submit to training and certification to be eligible to perform DOT physical examinations for truck drivers.

Government Oversight

We support:

1. Efforts to bring about greater uniformity and reciprocity among states on regulations affecting trucks and truck operators.
2. Efforts to ensure uniform interpretation and application of motor vehicle regulations by all government administrative and enforcement personnel.
3. Efforts to clarify and simplify the Vehicle Code and regulations relating to farm trucks and trailers.
4. Encouragement of the Division of Motor Vehicles to accept truck license plate renewals at all driver services facilities.
5. Efforts to have the County Engineer's office act as a clearing house for overweight and over dimension permits on all county and road district roads.
6. Having more Commercial Driver's License testing facilities be made available in the state for written and driving examinations.
7. Seeking to allow alternative means of posting bond, such as credit cards, for traffic and weight violations by all drivers licensed in the State of Illinois.
8. Seeking to permit second division vehicles, designed for pulling or carrying freight or cargo, that are visibly empty to forego the procedure of weighing at the scales in order to reduce truck traffic congestion at weigh stations.
9. Seeking to recognize vehicle license registered weight rate, rather than the vehicle manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating, to determine the eligibility of any vehicle for the purpose of the driver skills test to acquire a driver's license.

Other

We support:

1. The establishment of a state agency/transportation industry group designed as a coordinating mechanism to resolve problems associated with the regulation of motor vehicles.
2. Allowing anhydrous ammonia to be transferred from a cargo tank motor vehicle with a maximum capacity of 12,000 gallons into containers of 3,000 gallons capacity or less mounted on farm vehicles or into containers of 6,000 gallons mounted on motor-driven applicators provided that the cargo tank motor vehicle has been converted to proper industry standards and engineered and regulated equipment.
3. Urging local law enforcement officials and local civic and public service organizations to promote all-terrain vehicle safety programs.

4. Encouraging recreational users of roadways (runners/walkers/bikers) to wear reflective materials when on the road from dusk to dawn.
5. Seeking to establish a notification procedure that would provide property owners with the necessary information to identify vehicles that are towed from their property.
6. Seeking to exempt transportation of agricultural products from farm to market from USDOT number and Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) registration.

129. TRANSPORTATION -- UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

We support:

1. The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for commercial purposes (i.e., agricultural, forestry, and other natural resource use).
2. Working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to review the legal and technical issues related to agricultural UAV use.
3. Reasonable FAA regulations regarding agricultural use and permitting for private and commercial applications.
4. Requiring the operator of the UAV to gain the consent, in writing, of the landowner or tenant, if the UAV will be surveying or gathering data above the private property.
5. The development of guidelines for the safe operation of UAVs for all users.
6. Landowners and tenants to be able to fly their fields, for any reason, without it being considered a commercial activity.
7. Protecting property and privacy rights of farms and livestock operations while encouraging legitimate commercial and recreational uses of UAVs.

We oppose:

1. Federal, state, and law enforcement agencies using UAVs for the purpose of regulatory enforcement, litigation, and as a sole source for natural resource inventories used in planning efforts.
2. FAA regulations that classify UAVs as fixed-wing aircraft.
3. FAA regulations that require a private pilot's license and any medical certification to operate UAVs under 55 pounds.
4. The proposed FCC ban on DJI equipment use for agricultural purposes until American technology matches the quality, reliability, and performance of such technology.

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