

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FARMERS UNION POLICY 2012

NATIONAL
COLORADO
NEW MEXICO
WYOMING

As determined by delegate discussion and vote at the 2010 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Annual Convention—November 20, 2010, in Colorado Springs, Colorado

2011 Policy Committee

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Farmers Union**



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Our Mission

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union is a progressive, grassroots organization dedicated to

- achieving profitability for family farmers and ranchers;
- promoting stewardship of land and water resources;
- delivering safe, healthy food to consumers;
- strengthening rural communities through education, legislation, and cooperation;
- being the voice for family agriculture and rural communities.

Safe, healthy food begins with secure, profitable farm and ranch families.

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NATIONAL POLICY 2012

Article I. National Rural Policy

A. Family Farm Defined

A “family farm” is an agricultural production unit using land and other capital investments, operated by one or more farm operator families who reside on the farm, provide the management, take the economic risk, and do work (peak season excepted) required to operate the unit.

A “family farm corporation” means a corporation founded for the purpose of farming and the ownership of agricultural land in which the majority of the voting stock is held by, and the majority of the stockholders are, members of a family, at least one of whom is the person managing and working on the farm. A family farm corporation shall not cease to qualify as such by reason of any device or bequest of shares of voting stock.

B. Corporation Farming

An Industrial Corporate Farm is any entity engaged in agricultural production or agribusiness sales on a mass production scale.

Farming by large and non-family corporations, and by foreign owners, should be prohibited.

We oppose the vertical integration and consolidation of agribusiness corporations.

C. Agricultural Land

1. Ownership

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

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

We demand lands owned by foreign investors have all income taxes computed on an accrual basis so that agricultural products cannot be exported out of the United States without any income tax payment as is now possible on a cash basis. All foreign ownership of land shall be reported to each Secretary of State. Failure to report shall have substantial penalties. Compliance will insure payment of taxes by foreign owners.

We oppose foreign citizens (except those in the process of obtaining legal U. S. citizenship) leasing state land or holding federal grazing allotments. Those foreign citizens holding current leases should be required to relinquish them.

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

2. Agricultural Land

Preservation Programs

We support the use of transferable development rights, conservation easements, and other tools that will keep agricultural lands in production while also providing open space. When developmental rights for open space are purchased with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for agricultural use and production, the resale must be handled by offering the land publicly for purchase at that time. We support legislation that requires public entities to honor the terms of a conservation easement.

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

We support tax credits, through the sale of conservation easements, transferable development rights, etc., be marketable to those who have a tax liability.

3. Eminent Domain

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

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

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

All reclamation work will occur in a timely manner with bonding required to assure project success.

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

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

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

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

We insist court-adjusted compensation return value of highest use of a property—including relocation costs—to the owner, and that all legal costs should be paid by the government or agency condemning the property. We oppose the expansion of military reservations, including the taking of the lands and other associated rights, including air space, without just compensation.

D. National Food and Farm Policy

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

- A goal of parity of income on par with other sectors of the economy;
- A credit system that provides flexibility to farmers to finance inputs and invest in processing facilities to increase income;
- Conservation programs that will compensate farmers while protecting our nation’s greatest natural resources—the land, air and water;
- Financial and tax incentives to assist in making farming a career opportunity for all people;

- International trade agreements that achieve profitability for all American producers;
- Required Congressional approval of sanctions and embargos of agricultural and medical exports before they can be enacted;
- Incentives to encourage production of/and investment by family farmers and community-based organizations in processing and distribution of renewable energy systems;
- Regulations that establish and maintain fair, open and competitive markets with a transparent price discovery system;
- Implementation and safeguarding of food safety measures and enforcement of those measures already in place;
- Increased food safety and security with additional testing especially of foreign-produced products;
- Enforcement of existing food safety regulations on handlers and processors.

E. Farm Program Recommendations

1. Parity

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

a. The Concept of Parity

Parity (farm price index) measures the percentage change in prices received by farmers for the products they sell in relation to the prices paid by farmers for goods and services used in production, interest on capital, taxes and wages, compared with the base period of 1910-1914. A ratio of 100 percent implies the same relationship that existed in the base period. A 75 percent parity ratio indicates that the farmer's purchasing power was down to $\frac{3}{4}$ of what it would buy in the base period. Congress deemed the 1910-1914 base period as one in which there was a balanced relationship between farm and non-farm prices.

b. Parity as a Measurement

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

c. The Goal of Parity

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

2. Future Farm Programs

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

RMFU urges future farm programs to include an income support mechanism.

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

RMFU urges future farm programs to be linked directly to participation in conservation programs that are an integral part of production practices, providing producers with appropriate compensation for participation.

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

RMFU strongly supports establishing programs within the agencies of USDA that would offer assistance to beginning farmers/ranchers in their effort to become full-time producers.

RMFU urges that the \$4 billion reduction in spending on crop insurance in 2010 be recognized as an agricultural contribution to reducing the budget deficit.

RMFU urges that any reduction in the \$5.2 billion dollars spent annually on direct payments be reallocated and committed to fund improvement in the permanent disaster program, commodity support program, the risk management program, or funding for conservation, renewable energy and/or rural development programs

We support establishing limits on farm program payments.

3. Research and Development into Alternative Crops and Production Methods

We support alternatives to energy and chemical intensive methods of production. These include organic, free range, natural and integrated pest management alternatives.

We urge Congress and the USDA to re-commit and fully fund research into alternative crops and uses for crops. These crops would include, but are not limited to, canola, buckwheat, lupins, field peas, industrial hemp, millet, and straw. To facilitate this resolution, we urge the USDA to finalize the funding for the greenhouse complex at the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Central Great Plains Research Center at Akron, Colorado.

We further urge Congress and the USDA to implement a program to assist producers in obtaining and establishing profitable markets for these crops.

We support the USDA, ARS, and land grant and community colleges to increase publicly funded independent research to benefit all producers.

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

4. Organics/Natural Foods

We support those farmers who wish to pursue the production of food and fiber through organic and sustainable methods of farming. We urge close monitoring of the implementation of the Organic Foods Protection Act to protect the interests of the family farmers and consumers and the integrity of the Act.

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

We support developing national definitions and standards for naturally-labeled foods.

5. Risk Management

a. Federal Crop Insurance

We support efforts to improve the federal crop insurance program that

- Recognize federal crop insurance is not an effective substitute for other agricultural safety-net policies or programs;
- Are consistent with, and complements the goal of improving, short and long-term family farm and ranch economic sustainability;
- Provide equitable and adequate coverage levels at affordable prices for a broader range of commodities including specialty crops, production techniques and geographic regions;
- Encourage innovation to improve and develop risk management tools such as dollar per-acre coverage and revenue products for the livestock and dairy sectors;
- Recognize that short term financial soundness should not be the sole determinant in establishing types of coverage, insurance levels or rates;
- Eliminate un-harvested deductions for all crops.

We recommend that farmers relying on surface water for irrigation not be penalized by being forced to sign up crop acreage as dry land instead of irrigated land due to an “Act of God” resulting in lack of water because of drought.

We recommend coverage based on actual production history (A.P.H.) where available; for cases without A.P.H., the transitional yield cannot be lower than county Farm Service Agency (FSA) yields. Additionally, we urge the establishment of A.P.H. yield floors to protect the producer in the event of successive disasters. This floor cannot be lower than FSA yields. We support Crop Insurance that makes available up to 100 percent coverage levels.

We urge Congress to maintain the current premium subsidy levels on crop insurance, enabling the program to be an affordable management tool for producers.

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

We support Cost of Production Insurance.

We support the Risk Management Agency (RMA), using weather data where available on a section basis to assess moisture availability (rainfall and snowmelt) for crop production, in determination of prevented crop planting or crop losses.

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

We oppose any surcharge to farming practices after an organic A.P.H. is established.

We oppose the Risk Management Agency (RMA) allowing crop insurance premium discounts with regard to consumption of specific crop inputs offered by a single company.

b. Disaster Programs

We support the permanent disaster assistance program in the Farm Bill with complete funding.

6. Conservation

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

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

a. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

We support expired CRP acres being eligible to be re-enrolled in the program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

b. Conservation Security Program (CSP₁)

We support funding and full compliance of the Conservation Security Program contracts written and signed under the guidelines of the 2002 Farm Bill.

c. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP₂)

We support implementation of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP₂) provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill as a full, nationwide and unrestricted program. No reduction or limiting structures or schemes should be instituted in contradiction to the intent of Congress. We urge implementation of CSP₂ in a manner that recognizes conservation practices appropriate to different climatic regions and provides such agricultural production practices to be adequately scored by the Conservation Management Tool (CMT).

d. Cost Share Programs—

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

RMFU supports the continuation of cost share programs that

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

e. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

We support continuation and urge full funding of the CREP program.

f. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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

7. Wool and Mohair Program

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

8. Sugar Program

We support the continuation of the Sugar Program.

We urge close collaboration with the sugar beet growers associations.

9. Honey Loan Program

We support the Honey Loan Program.

F. Labeling

RMFU supports implementation and full funding of country-of-origin labeling (COOL) as passed by Congress in the Farm Bill. Domestic producers should not bear the cost of implementation of this act. All costs associated with determining and marketing foreign country-of-origin products (not born, raised and processed in the United States) shall be paid by the importers.

Imported food should carry a quality grade label and country of origin label.

We are in favor of clear and mandatory labeling of additives, meat irradiation and genetically modified organisms in all food. We further believe that there should be better labeling with respect to the amount of additives in meat and meat products.

We urge that the amounts of extenders and additives in food served in eating establishments be clearly indicated on the menu.

We recommend that all imitation and synthetic products be conspicuously labeled and displayed as such.

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

We urge the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to amend its regulations to require that all meat/poultry labeled as natural be required to be sourced from animals that were not administered growth hormones or sub-therapeutic antibiotics.

G. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

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

H. Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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

RMFU is against further downsizing within the FSA and other USDA agencies as it is detrimental to rural America and the ability of the agencies to fulfill their mission.

We oppose county office consolidation, as we support each county having adequate staffing and training to provide good service to the agriculture community.

We strongly urge the continuation and strengthening of the county and community committee system for farm program administration.

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

We urge the Farm Service Agency loan programs allow cooperative equity stock to serve as collateral for farmer investment in new cooperatives.

I. Rural Development

We support multi-year funding for the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service at levels that will sustain programs for revolving loans, grants and loan guarantees.

Sustainability of rural America depends upon an enhanced quality of life for rural people who have the ability to build competitive businesses and cooperatives.

RMFU supports increased funding for cooperative development activities and for training and technical assistance for all cooperatives.

RMFU opposes any reduction of funding for rural development programs and support full funding of existing programs.

J. Cooperative Financing

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

K. Federal Meat Grading and Inspections

We demand all imported meat and other foods federally inspected under U.S. health laws carry an "imported and inspected" label. All imported meat that doesn't meet USDA standards should not be allowed into the United States.

All meats imported into the United States should be inspected more stringently and equitably.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We support standardizing the federal laws to determine moisture content allowance of all meat products. Any water added during processing must be plainly labeled.

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

L. Farm Labor and Immigration

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

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

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

We urge the adoption of federal immigration legislation with an agricultural worker program that provides work authorization for the experienced and consistent farm labor force with visas of adequate length to meet the diverse needs of agriculture and also meet the security needs of the United States. We oppose the adoption of a mandatory E-Verify program without the inclusion of a workable agricultural worker program.

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

We endorse the principles of the Utah Compact.

M. Federal School Lunch Program

We urge the government to purchase an increased amount of domestically produced basic agricultural commodities for use in the school lunch program wherever possible.

We also believe the federal government should subsidize the milk program for school children.

We urge Congress to retain and fully support a school lunch program at the federal level that follows USDA dietary guidelines.

We support the Farm to School Program to encourage the use of local farm products in the School Lunch Program but oppose the use of imported products.

N. Farm to Consumer Food Systems

We support systems like Farm-to-School (Cafeteria, College, Institution) and Share U.S.A., which facilitate the process of consumers and publicly funded institutions buying food directly from domestic agricultural producers.

We support community-supported agriculture (CSAs) operations as another source of accessing farm fresh products.

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

We support farmers markets and other local production initiatives.

O. Cooperatives

The member-owned cooperative is an effective institution through which members can reduce costs of production, maintain a reliable source of inputs, and effectively market and process their products.

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

Concerted efforts should be made to form specialized cooperatives that allow farmers to sell locally made, value-added products directly to consumers.

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

THE UTAH COMPACT

A declaration of five principles to guide Utah's immigration discussion

FEDERAL SOLUTIONS Immigration is a federal policy issue between the U.S. government and other countries—not Utah and other countries. We urge Utah's congressional delegation, and others, to lead efforts to strengthen federal laws and protect our national borders. We urge state leaders to adopt reasonable policies addressing immigrants in Utah.

LAW ENFORCEMENT We respect the rule of law and support law enforcement's professional judgment and discretion. Local law enforcement resources should focus on criminal activities, not civil violations of federal code.

FAMILIES Strong families are the foundation of successful communities. We oppose policies that unnecessarily separate families. We champion policies

that support families and improve the health, education and well-being of all Utah children.

ECONOMY Utah is best served by a free-market philosophy that maximizes individual freedom and opportunity. We acknowledge the economic role immigrants play as workers and taxpayers. Utah's immigration policies must reaffirm our global reputation as a welcoming and business-friendly state.

A FREE SOCIETY Immigrants are integrated into communities across Utah. We must adopt a humane approach to this reality, reflecting our unique culture, history and spirit of inclusion. The way we treat immigrants will say more about us as a free society and less about our immigrant neighbors. Utah should always be a place that welcomes people of goodwill.

<http://www.utahcompact.com/>

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

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

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

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

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

We encourage careful consideration of joint ventures between cooperatives and corporations or other entities not protected under the Capper-Volstead Act.

We oppose the double taxation of a co-op on both total savings and the producer's share of these returns as personal income.

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

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

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

We support the efforts of the National Commission for Uniform State Laws (NCUSL) to draft a modern and standard state cooperative law to allow additional flexibility in the organization and management of these important businesses and new generation co-ops.

We encourage NCUSL, in its new draft, to preserve cooperative values and the "cooperative" brand.

P. Trade Policy

1. Foreign Policy

We recommend the United States maintain a return to positive trade balance and oppose the use of embargos and sanctions for political purposes.

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

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

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

We strongly request the USDA work to expand foreign markets for any domestically produced farm and ranch commodities without the exploitation of developing countries by forcing them to abandon domestic food security.

We support the following provisions to improve international food assistance:

- Funding for food aid programs should be used exclusively to purchase U.S. produced food.
- Food and development aid should be assured for those here and abroad who are poor, and certainly those endangered by natural disasters and famine, to assure their survival and well-being.
- Food should be distributed once it reaches intended destination and have no tolerance for donations using poverty-stricken nations as a dumping ground for poor-quality grains.
- Adequate funding of the international school lunch program as part of the Global Food for Education Initiative.
- Food assistance programs operating in cooperation with hunger and agricultural organizations supporting economic development opportunities for people in less-developed countries.

We oppose trade agreements that override the sovereign authority of any nation.

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

All imported agricultural commodities, food, feeds and fibers, must receive the same inspection as U.S. produced food and meet the same health and safety standards and regulations.

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

Imported food should carry a quality grade label and country of origin label.

We demand that Congress and especially USDA, and other agencies of the Federal government, immediately stop their unilateral support of so-called free trade agreements that benefit multinational corporations, destroy our nation's food independence and sovereignty, and our proven family farm and ranch system of agriculture.

RMFU supports mandatory recall authority for the FDA.

We oppose the dumping of foreign honey into the United States.

2. Long-term Trade Agreements

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

- Establish trade agreements that address the cause of and need for trade distorting practices, i.e., domestic food safety and security, inadequate economic returns to producers resulting from market failure, lack of market competition, and an imbalance in supply and demand.
- Ensure global food security and safety, including the elimination of unilateral sanctions on agricultural and medical products.
- Enhance producer returns, economic development and individual standards of living.
- Establish trade agreements that acknowledge and accommodate the non-market costs/benefits and resource sustainability of agriculture.
- Create an agriculture trade environment that encourages a balance of increased and transparent market competition, limits the concentration of market power, and coordinates public competi-

tion policy to ensure the efficient and appropriate allocation of resources within all agricultural sectors.

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

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

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

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

We urge greater cooperation among countries to stabilize world agriculture.

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

We believe Congress should have full opportunity to review and amend provisions of a trade agreement because agriculture is only one area considered in the trade agreement negotiation and fast-track could easily sweep the concerns of agriculture aside.

Q. Federal Public Lands

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

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

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

We oppose the sale or exchange of public lands currently used in agriculture production. We support increasing the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program on federally owned land to our county governments.

We support a law establishing a fee in lieu of taxes, similar to the federal law, on all state and municipal lands and that the fee should be returned to the counties in which the state lands are located.

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

1. Management of Lands

We support a workable plan, whereby our federal lands are sustained in a responsible manner in the multiple-use concept and with quality stewardship.

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

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

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

Livestock grazing management is essential to maintaining the health of the resources.

We support management of grazing on federal lands to be based on scientific data and monitoring of individual allotments.

Grazing allotments should be restricted to family farms.

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

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

We urge federal grazing fees continue to be set by the PRIA formula and increases shall not exceed the annual rate of inflation.

We support keeping local grazing committees intact to handle grazing allotment management issues disputes.

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

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

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

We oppose permitting non-grazers to bid up the price of an allotment thus denying access to moderate-income families.

We oppose separating water from existing leases.

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

We urge foreign companies logging public lands to use American contractors.

a) Forest Health

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

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

We support implementation and full funding of efforts to minimize the effects of the bark beetle epidemics on the National and State Forests throughout the Western United States. Federal, state and private programs must be approved immediately to protect open space, wildlife habitat, watersheds, clean air and other natural resources as well as infrastructure such as roads and utility lines for public safety.

2. Wild Horse Population

The Bureau of Land Management must follow through with required annual surveys and management plans to control wild horse and burro populations in order to minimize damage to private and public lands.

We support the USDA-inspected horse and burro adoption program. We oppose release of animals back onto public lands if they have failed to be adopted.

R. New Agricultural Production Technologies

We urge consideration of the whole range of social, economic and ecological consequences before implementation of new agricultural production technologies.

We urge the use of extreme caution in the introduction and use of GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) products until independent scientific research proves that they are safe both ecologically and for human and animal consumption.

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

We oppose the introduction of GMOs that produce sterile offspring and support the right of farmers to plant seed derived from proprietary organisms on their own land.

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

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

We oppose the use of imported Milk Protein Concentrate.

1. Agricultural Research

We urge those in agricultural research, particularly land grant universities, to intensify their efforts to develop farm technology which enhances the relationship between people and the land, protects the environment, separates agricultural research from dependence on multi-national/national corporations and fosters the well-being of family farmers.

We recommend increasing the funding for agricultural research.

2. Small Business Development Authority

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

3. Genetic Patents

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

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

We oppose the commercial use of the terminal gene.

We support establishing and maintaining foundation seed banks.

S. Livestock Health

We demand USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and other research organizations actively pursue research to clearly establish transmission modes, vaccination regimes and protocol for vesicular stomatitis.

We request quarantine restrictions be reevaluated.

We demand all cattle entering the United States from foreign soil be tested for all classes of diseases.

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

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

We support incentives for veterinary students who agree to serve underserved areas after graduation.

We demand all federal and state agencies charged with wildlife management take steps to eradicate brucellosis and chronic wasting disease from all wildlife under their control.

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

We support the "Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign" which states that continuous sub-therapeutic antibiotic use as a feed additive should be banned.

We urge Congress to reopen and modernize the Plum Island Research Facility and cease research and testing of Class V diseases at any United States mainland location.

T. Animal Identification and Livestock Traceability

Farmers Union commends the USDA for dropping their proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

RMFU believes our states have workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health. We oppose any national animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease through traceability.

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

RMFU opposes any premise registration and electronic or biometric identification program that

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

We urge all states to work with all neighboring states with a brand program, to include brands, hot iron as well as freeze brands, as an acceptable form of identification for producers that move cattle interstate under the proposed Animal Disease Traceability Program.

U. Domestic Horse Population

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

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

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

V. Endangered Species Act

We support an Endangered Species Act that takes input from landowners, tribal and elected officials from a large geographic area to get an Endangered Species designation.

We oppose the application of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) critical habitat designation to habitat that is not occupied by any listed species.

We oppose the reintroduction of predatory animals in areas where they may have an adverse effect on agricultural operations.

We demand that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service require the use of scientific data in species determination before listing can occur.

We demand federal funds be made available to state or federal agencies to manage endangered species and just compensation for producers with ESA habitat and/or for losses incurred. The delisting process should automatically be triggered when species targets identified in the listing document are reached.

We support delisting of the grizzly bear and all wolf species by Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.

We support keeping prairie dogs off the endangered species list.

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

W. Animal Welfare

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

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

X. International Relations

1. United Nations

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

2. Agricultural Democracy

We support progressive, nonviolent movements such as the WFO, committed to agricultural justice for all people of this nation and the world.

3. World Food

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

We support programs that distribute and assure delivery of food to the needy.

Article II. Economic and Tax Policy

Farm policy advanced by some agribusiness groups promotes corporate consolidation, eliminates fair markets, and creates an uneven economic playing field for small, minority and independent family producers. Such groups, who receive substantial monetary benefits from the public sector, should encourage and welcome public scrutiny into their business operations. They have profited greatly from special tax privileges. We urge Congress to investigate these issues with the protection of rural America and its heritage in mind.

A. Tax Reform

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

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

- Provide federal income tax credits or refunds if no tax liability exists for the payment of state and local property taxes.
- Reform of the capital gains tax to include an exemption on the sale of farm real estate comparable to the exemption provided on the sale of a residence.
- Reduction or elimination of the capital gains tax for a seller when land and machinery is sold to a beginning farmer at a reduced rate or the seller finances the purchase at a discounted interest rate.
- Allow a one-time per person rollover of the capital gains from the sale of a farm or small business into an approved retirement plan.
- Allow the cost of health insurance coverage for self-employed people to be fully deductible for income tax purposes on Schedule C or Schedule F.
- Tax credits incurred through the sale of conservation easements, transferable development rights, etc., should be transferable to those who have a tax liability.
- Federal tax credits be given to landowners who implement riparian improvements on their property under approved federal agency guidelines, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

We oppose the use of IRS for political intimidation.

B. Estate Tax

We support an exemption system for estate taxes which allows family businesses to continue to exist. We oppose shifting tax liability from the estate tax to the capital gains tax through the elimination of the "step-up" provision within the capital gains tax policy. We support a permanent exemption of \$5 million, which amount will be periodically adjusted to reflect C.P.I.

C. Internet Tax

We oppose any taxation for the use of the Internet.

D. Internet Sales Tax

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

E. Commodity Check-off Programs

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

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

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

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

F. Commodity Futures Markets

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

We urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to modify the authority granted the exchanges to expand commodity price variations. We urge the Commission to direct exchanges to return the variation allowances to the year 2000 spread which will bring more stability to the daily market of commodities and provide a partial safety net to producers.

We urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission direct exchanges to expand the number of delivery points within their region for actual delivery options for farmers and elevators buying from farmers.

G. Farm Credit System (FCS)

We support a strong Farm Credit system.

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

We oppose the FCS severing mineral rights on property foreclosed upon and subsequently sold.

H. Warehousing

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

Warehouses must be required to issue negotiable warehouse receipts upon request.

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

I. Vertical Integration and Price Fixing

We demand the Secretary of Agriculture and the Department of Justice act to remedy the concentration of power and vertical integration in the packing, marketing, processing, and crop and livestock input industries.

We affirm the right of USDA to create and implement GIPSA rules and regulations to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.

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

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

J. Anti-Trust Enforcement

We demand enforcement of the existing anti-trust laws to break up corporate concentration in our food production, marketing, and crop and livestock input systems.

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

K. Federal Reserve

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

We support an annual audit of the Federal Reserve System.

L. Regulating Risk in the Financial Services Industry

We support the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 and urge a re-regulation of the financial services industry.

M. Community Financial Institutions

We support community financial institutions through federal regulatory relief and forbearance that allows community financial institutions to work with family farms, ranches, and small businesses borrowers.

Article III. Utilities, Conservation, Energy, and Development Policy

A. Conservation

We encourage responsible stewardship of land, water, and energy resources, and appropriate conservation practices.

We insist that all mining, logging, and petroleum exploration operations restore the surface to its original or higher land classification with native or prior vegetation.

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

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

We recommend an increased emphasis on reclamation and re-establishment of riparian zones.

We urge the reuse and/or recycling of all products possible.

We insist that all open and unused water wells, seismograph holes, and oil and gas wells, be covered or filled to prevent underground pollution and to eliminate danger to people and animals.

We support preventing chemical and biological contamination in surface and groundwater including shallow and porous aquifers under the protection of the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts. Also, we support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

We support environmentally sound forest management which addresses forest health issues.

B. Pests and Noxious Weeds

We urge rigid enforcement of laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all lands. We recommend increased funding of cost-share programs to control noxious weeds and pests be established.

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

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

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

C. Predator and Pest Control

We request that the EPA improve the process enabling effective use of poisons and other control tools for predators and pests.

D. Rural Utility Services (RUS)

We support the rural utility cooperatives and oppose their privatization.

We encourage Congress to keep the RUS Revolving Fund intact.

We urge that Congress grant rural utility co-ops territorial protection.

We encourage RUS and we direct REAs and their generation and transmission providers to expand their portfolio to include clean energy production, energy efficiencies, and demand-side management.

E. Telecommunications

We support the efforts of rural utility service co-ops to provide rural cable television or satellite dish service to their members.

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

We support enhanced 911 emergency telephone service in rural areas.

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

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

F. Power Utilities

We oppose electric deregulation at the federal and state level.

We oppose any sale of Power Marketing Authorities.

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

We encourage WAPA to build transmission infrastructure for renewable energy.

We are opposed to any surcharge on hydroelectric rates.

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

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

We recommend the modernization and updating of existing hydroelectric plants to provide maximum electrical energy, especially in the western states, with any increase of energy allocated to preference power users. Further, we urge the development of secondary hydro generation structures at existing dam sites to at least double current energy production.

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

G. Water

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

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

We support legislation to prevent the removal of water from the basin of origin without a complete impact statement concerning the affect on agriculture, environment and economic stability. The basin of origin must be compensated for any water removed.

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

Water rights should not be created with wilderness and National Park designation except those adjudicated by state law.

We support relaxing of EPA standards regarding silt runs for irrigation purposes.

Farmers should not assume higher costs for irrigation water due to in-stream flow for recreation or habitat enhancement for EPA listings.

We oppose the augmentation of surface waters that exceed the natural capacity of the channel, excluding runoff events, by Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) and other produced water discharges.

H. Native American Water Rights

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

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

I. Water Quality

We urge state enforcement of sole source aquifer regulations.

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

We support state regulation and enforcement of water quality standards on water produced and discharged from oil and gas operations and urban water discharges.

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

We strongly oppose in situ leach mining.

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

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

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

J. Federal Water Projects

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

K. Energy

1. Research and Development

We recommend the development and implementation of a comprehensive national energy policy which will make the United States energy independent and promote conservation.

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

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

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

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

2. Alternative and Renewable Energy

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

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

We support federal energy incentives for all forms of alternative and renewable energy that encourage community, farm, and ranch-owned

production, including the Production Tax Credit, Rural Energy for America Program, and Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

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

We support a nationwide renewable energy standard and renewable fuels standard.

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

RMFU offers full support and endorsement of the national campaign, 25X25. This initiative urges that programs and incentives be established at the state and national levels to enable the United States to produce 25 percent of its own energy from renewable sources by 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

We urge siting of new transmission lines take advantage of existing corridors wherever possible. We also urge siting on public lands vs. private lands. If sited on private lands, landowners should be compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement, including the option of annual payments. We support agriculture being unregulated in any climate change legislation.

3. Nuclear

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

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

4. Petroleum

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

RMFU supports Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards as it has wide-ranging benefits resulting from less fuel consumption.

L. Greenhouse Gas Mitigation

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

RMFU supports research into terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including grazing lands, energy feed-stock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, no-till, bio-char, and other proven conservation methods.

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

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

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

M. Alternative Fuels

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

We support a Producers Tax Credit that will be only available to domestic producers.

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

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

We support increasing the blend of domestically produced ethanol in all gasoline sold in the United States.

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

We support mandating a federal bio-fuels standard.

N. Alternative Crops

We support the decoupling of industrial hemp from the definition of marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act of 1970.

We demand the President and the Attorney General direct the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to differentiate between industrial hemp and marijuana and adopt a policy to allow American farmers to grow industrial hemp under state law without requiring DEA licenses.

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

We support research and development of less-water-intensive crops.

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

O. Regulatory Agencies

We support periodic review of regulations set forth by federal agencies.

We oppose administrative agencies prohibiting the use of agricultural chemicals without extensive research that prove their detrimental effects.

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

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

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

We demand compliance and enforcement of current anti-pollution laws.

We oppose administrative agencies regulating agricultural practices without extensive research proving their detrimental effects.

P. Transportation

1. Railroads

We support the publication of existing freight rates.

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

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

We urge railroads, elevators, and terminals to work together to provide hopper cars in sufficient quantities in a timely manner to alleviate harvest delays.

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

We urge the expansion of the national passenger railway service.

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

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

We urge continued research on railroad crossing technology and safety.

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

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

2. Highways

We urge passage of laws mandating washout requirements for all carriers prior to hauling food-grade loads.

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

We oppose the proposed construction of the North American Free Trade Agreement Superhighway system.

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

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

We recommend a nationwide standardization of the axle weights and lengths on all interstate highways: 36,000 lbs. per tandem and 20,000 lbs. per single axle.

We recommend a maximum width standard of 8’6” and a length standard of 57’4” maximum for semi trailers.

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

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

We support compliance with child restraint and seat belt laws in motor vehicles.

3. Mass Transit

We urge development of mass transit systems.

Q. Waste Disposal

1. Toxic Waste

We oppose the practice of land filling with hazardous waste.

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

2. Non-Toxic Waste

We support efforts in the legislature to require industry be accountable for the wastes they generate.

3. Recycling

We support recycling of all oil and other lubricants.

We favor recycling and re-use of all products.

We encourage development of recycling and composting industries in rural areas.

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

4. Pollution Prevention

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

R. Rural Revitalization

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

S. Infrastructure Ownership

We oppose foreign ownership or control of any infrastructure items, including but not limited to highways, airlines, railroads, public or private utilities, and energy production.

Article IV. Educational and Social Policy

A. Education

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

Congress must revise the federal Elementary/Secondary Education Act (otherwise known as “No Child Left Behind”) to provide more flexibility to state and local education agencies in measuring student achievement. The current Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) Standard, for example, is statistically impossible to meet and must be eliminated.

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

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

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

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

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

Financial aid should not be dependent on the value of the farm but on the family’s annual net income.

We support funding (maintaining of Perkins funds) for vocational education at the secondary and post-secondary level and drivers’ education programs.

We urge all state legislatures to make driver’s education mandatory for all students before receiving their driver’s license.

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

B. Land Grant Universities

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

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

We urge land grant universities to maintain agricultural extension and research programs that

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

C. Nutrition Programs

We support continuation of the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Seniors National Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

We support reauthorization and full funding of federal nutrition programs under the auspices of the USDA such as School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Feeding Program, and Special Supplemental Food Program for WIC.

We support continuation of the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program and expansion of the program to include farmers markets.

We support education of elderly about the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program.

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

We support the WIC program as well as the senior citizen nutrition program to provide mothers, children and senior citizens with food from farmers markets.

We support food education programs such as Slow Foods and local food nutrition training.

D. National Health Insurance

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

We urge insurance companies to provide coverage for preventative care.

We demand ending discrimination in insurance based on pre-existing condition or gender. We also support the elimination of payment caps. We support the deductibility of premiums for small businesses and the self-employed.

E. Medical Care

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

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

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

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

We support federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid.

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

Rural hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) provide basic acute inpatient services and outpatient primary care in rural communities, serving as a healthcare hub for rural areas. We support payment reform efforts and continued cost-based reimbursement for rural hospitals and CAHs for Medicare services.

We support recalculation of reimbursement formulas.

We support federal funding for rural health clinics.

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

We urge priority be given to building assisted-living facilities for older citizens.

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

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

We oppose removal of mandated health benefits.

We support cost containment of pharmaceuticals and healthcare services.

We support incentives for medical students who agree to serve medically underserved areas after graduation.

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

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

We support changing the Medicare Part A hospice benefit so that it is dependent upon physician certification rather than a specified time limit.

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

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

F. Social Security

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

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

We oppose the loss of benefits after remarriage, deductions from pensions when social security payments are raised, and inequities in the social security program when joint tax returns are filed.

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

G. Social Services

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

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

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

H. Veterans' Benefits

We support full implementation and funding of veterans' benefits.

We support medical research and localized care for our veterans.

I. Postal Service and Rates

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

We recommend that the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) seek out consumer advice in initiating any changes in postal service.

We urge Congress to repeal the requirement that the USPS pre-fund 75 years of projected USPS pension program costs in 10 years. RMFU opposes political manipulation of the USPS and calls on Congress to restore all funds contributed by the USPS to pre-fund the pension program used by the government to offset debit and to authorize the USPS to use those funds for operational costs

RMFU opposes the closure of any rural Post Office. The lack of high-speed internet and broadband requires rural residents and businesses to rely on the USPS for transacting their business. Closures or con-

solidation of rural Post Offices must include provisions for patrons to receive their mail by rural free delivery.

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

We urge Congress to block any efforts to privatize the U.S. Postal Service.

J. Congressional and Presidential Elections

We support a single national primary election day.

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

We support a limit on political action committee (PAC) personal and corporate contributions to campaigns.

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

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

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

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

We support the elimination of “527” organizations.

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

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

We support efficient processes that promote ease and access to voting by all citizens.

COLORADO STATE POLICY 2012

Article I. Land

A. Land Use

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

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

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

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

We oppose unsustainable growth in rural areas.

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

We urge the implementation of adequate impact fees on new growth that affects agricultural operations.

The public should be provided with an impact statement on proposed development.

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

1. Agricultural Land Preservation

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

When developmental rights for open space are purchased with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for farming, the resale must be handled by offering that land publicly for purchase at that time.

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

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

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

We support stronger oversight over conservation easements.

We support working with organizations proposing to work with RMFU to initiate a pilot program that may serve as a model for a statewide land link program.

B. Economic Development

We support the use of nonproductive lands in agricultural areas for nonagricultural uses provided it maintains or creates a harmonious environment in the community and does not place an undue burden on local economies and local governments.

We support an infrastructure that promotes stable economic systems that preserve rural character.

C. State Lands

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

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

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

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

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

We oppose lessee assessment of any property taxes on property owned by the state. We support the state paying appropriate local property tax on state lands equivalent to the surrounding area.

D. Eminent Domain

We oppose state laws which allow condemnation of property for private enterprise projects or the condemnation of private property for private gain.

We support the repeal of any such state laws.

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

E. Corporate Farming

We support legislation that prohibits ownership by non-U.S.-residents of agricultural operations.

We support the re-enacting of HB 86-1284, the Agricultural Homestead Protection and Rural Economic Stabilization Act.

We are opposed to processing corporations owning any agricultural land not necessary for production or distribution.

F. Oil and Minerals

We support an assessment of taxes on severed mineral rights that will adequately fund infrastructure needs for affected communities and the state.

We demand mineral rights if not leased revert to the surface owner if the holder of the severed mineral rights does not declare ownership or is delinquent on taxes for three years. If such mineral rights have returned to the surface holder, there should be no separate tax on said mineral rights.

We support the current effort to stop any open-pit cyanide gold mines from being licensed in the state of Colorado, in order to protect our valuable natural resources, including our ground and surface water.

We urge the passage of legislation that gives local governments the authority to regulate off-site impacts of oil and gas development to ensure that companies are in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations prior to issuing drilling permits.

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

We encourage meaningful participation by local governments and the public in the federal leasing process.

We support adequate funding for state agencies with regulatory authority over oil shale development.

We support lessees of oil or mineral rights paying for all entries on the land abstracts and all transfers if lease is resold or divided.

We oppose the sale of federal oil shale lands and mineral rights.

We support enforcement of monitoring meters on oil and gas wells for purpose of severance tax collection.

We support the right to explore non-productive oil and gas zones with a primary lease.

We demand that any mining operation must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that they will not harm water, air, or soil quality, or public health, before they are given the required local and state permits to commence their operation.

We demand that if leases are over 5 years and have not been developed they should be surrendered or renegotiated without question.

We demand that royalty payments be issued within 180 days of completion of drilling of a new well.

G. Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

We support a working relationship with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) and agriculture agencies to forge productive options and solutions to severed mineral development compensation.

We support legislation to require that oil and gas companies disclose any and all chemical compounds being introduced into the environment in oil and gas development.

We support equal representation by non-industry citizens on the COGCC, including a representative of the health industry and an agricultural landowner.

We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral development, especially for those circumstances involving a split estate, as well as legal recourse available for disputes to all citizens of the United States.

Compensation to the surface owner should cover the decrease in fair market value of the surface estate reasonably expected to result from oil and gas operations. Determination of decreased fair market value shall be limited to the portion of the surface estate directly associated with oil and gas operations and should include the loss of agriculture production and income, lost land value, loss of use of access to the surface owner's land, and loss of value of improvements.

We believe that the development of the natural resources of oil and gas in the state of Colorado should be regulated for the protection of public health, safety, welfare and the environment.

Article II. Water

A. Preservation of Agricultural Water

We support the development of a statewide water plan based on consultation with the inter-basin roundtables.

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

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

We urge the state to return the management of rivers and wells back to the authority of the state engineer. We support the management of water to allow aquifers to recharge.

We support incentives and funding for cities to build land treatment sewage plants if they are not injurious, to either quality or quantity, to water users that have a priority for the use of the water.

We support efforts to develop programs for conservation of water.

We demand adoption of legislation to protect agricultural and individual water rights. We demand municipalities pursue other alternatives for water supplies, including conservation and water projects, before acquiring agricultural water.

We support the continuation of the SNOTEL measuring stations throughout Colorado.

We support compensation not limited to federal crop insurance to farmers when water rights have been curtailed, since the affected crops are planted without knowledge that water would become unavailable.

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

B. Water Diversion

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

Any water right that was adjudicated prior to the execution of any compact of its respective river drainage, and which has been administered as a "futile call" for a continuous period of 50 or more years, shall henceforth be declared and administered as a futile call.

In water diversion issues, we support top priority for agricultural water, as long as such projects do not cause loss or injury to existing agricultural operations.

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

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

C. Raw Water Projects

We urge the Colorado state legislature to continue the use of the Water Conservation Board construction fund to rehabilitate dam structures and increase storage/holding capacity.

We urge the legislature to provide a fund for raw water projects, including

- Construction of new dams, or rehabilitation and enlargement of existing dams;
- Rehabilitation or construction of agricultural water supply systems including diversion dams, ditches, and head gates.

D. Water Projects

We support those water projects that retain water for use in the state of Colorado and encourage construction of additional projects which are directly beneficial to agriculture and the economy of our state.

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

We oppose any plan to construct additional transbasin diversions from the San Luis Valley, Western Slope and Arkansas River basin within the confines of the prior appropriations doctrine.

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

Municipalities, individuals, corporations, or any other entities that buy agricultural water rights must return the formerly irrigated land to a stable non-erodible condition. The entity buying the water rights shall bear the expense of revegetating the land.

We oppose any privatization of public water systems or sanitation systems.

We demand election of directors of the Republican River Water Conservation Board shall be by special irrigation assessment payers within that district.

We support an impact fee of \$1,000 for new houses or \$500 per unit in multi-family units, and \$2,000 per house with new well, to be used to fund future water storage projects.

E. Water Quality

RMFU should closely monitor and participate in regulatory proceedings intended to establish standards for preserving the quality of surface and underground water for fairness and equality for agricultural producers.

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

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

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

We support the Water Quality Control Commission and ask that they maintain their regulation of water discharges from energy exploration and operations.

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

We support preventing chemical and biological contamination in shallow and porous aquifers, and we support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

F. Soil and Water Conservation

We urge the continuation of a strong relationship with the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) to help maintain present programs and to implement new programs for conserving our natural resources.

Article III. Alternative & Renewable Energy

We call on the Department of Natural Resources and the Governor's Energy Office to develop a comprehensive energy policy.

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

We ask for state support of alternative and renewable types of distributed power systems. Such state support should include net-metering legislation that allows small-scale energy producers to supply their excess energy to the grid, tax credits, and a buy-down program aimed toward these new systems. The state should encourage energy efficient design and Energy-Star rated appliances for all new construction.

We support incentives for any renewable energy industry.

We support research and development of carbon capture and storage (CCS) facilities, and encourage a state policy that states landowners will own the pore space that stores carbon, with the understanding that landowners will not share in the risks associated with CCS.

A. Bio-Fuels

We support the Colorado bio-fuels industry and the use of alternative crops for energy use.

We urge the use of ethanol-based fuels of at least 92 octane year-round.

We support the further development and distribution of E-85 fuel and biodiesel, including long term financial support to build the infrastructure bio-fuel firms say is necessary to compete in the marketplace.

We support the further development of infrastructure for blender pumps.

B. Wind

We encourage the individual or community-owned development and ownership of wind energy and co-generation production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursement to landowners.

We oppose the severance of wind rights from landowner surface rights.

C. Solar

We encourage the development of solar energy, including solar thermal, in Colorado. We support community solar garden models to allow for greater participation in solar projects.

We oppose the severance of solar rights from landowner surface rights.

D. Electric Transmission

We support new transmission corridors if landowners are compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement. We support annual payments as a form of compensation for easements. We do not support allowing independent transmission developers siting corridors to exercise eminent domain, and we demand that private property owners should be invited to be part of transmission planning meetings.

E. Net-Metering Policy

RMFU supports requiring Rural Electric Associations (REA) to increase net metering for agricultural operations and rural businesses.

We support feed-in tariffs and standard offers for locally owned renewable energy projects that are economically viable and provide benefits to the energy grid through distributed energy production.

F. Financial Incentives

We support the creation of a Renewable Energy Trust Fund to finance individual and community-owned renewable energy projects

and agricultural projects, to be funded by severance taxes from new oil and gas production.

We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects which is tradable to any interested parties.

RMFU supports a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment similar to the Farm Equipment Exemption.

RMFU supports the dedication of a portion of Colorado's severance tax revenues to individual and community-owned renewable projects.

RMFU supports the incorporation of individual and community-owned projects into larger commercial projects, such as the sharing on transmission lines.

RMFU supports the reservation of transmission line capacity for renewable energy.

G. Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)

We support a state policy that would create an expanded renewable portfolio standard for alternative energy, especially advocating solar, wind, biomass, geo-exchange and bio-fuels.

We support the state policy that increases the renewable energy standard to 30 percent by 2020. We urge Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA), Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Western Areas Power Administration (WAPA) and all of the member-owned utilities to fully support the development of renewable energy, including opening their grid to purchasing individual and community-owned renewable energy.

We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources, including but not limited to cellulosic ethanol and woody biomass. We encourage the Governor's Energy Office to organize interested stakeholders into a task force on renewable energy to provide research and support for renewable energy programs, bio-fuel production and carbon sequestration.

Article IV. Economic Policy

A. Taxes

RMFU supports reimbursement to counties for a portion of property taxes lost when tracts of land are removed from tax rolls.

We support requiring municipalities and utilities owning land outside its corporate limits to pay its property taxes at the original taxing level.

We support the concept of basing agricultural property tax on productivity.

We support school district financing being based more on a progressive state income tax and severance tax on minerals, and less on property taxes.

We recommend that repair parts for farm equipment continue to be exempt from state and local sales tax.

We support using statewide, non-regressive sales and use taxes (with current exemptions for food, energy, seed, farm goods, renewable energy equipment and materials, and production equipment) for education and other essential government services.

Rural land, rural vehicles and equipment, and rural residents and businesses should be exempt from taxes for urban infrastructure and projects.

We urge rural fire district approval of substations whenever a community is willing to man and financially support that substation.

We oppose the assessment of possessory interest taxation on the value of grazing and farming leases on government lands.

We support the increase of severance taxes on all non-renewable energy sources and minerals in Colorado.

We support deductions to farmers who donate to certified food banks.

B. Workers' Compensation

We support reduced workers' compensation rates and costs for family farms and their seasonal industries.

We recommend that the workers' compensation law be amended to recognize the unique nature of agriculture and to provide an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.

C. Mechanical Lien

We support amending the mechanical lien law to protect an individual who can prove payment for materials to a contractor from the contractor's creditors.

We support a mechanical lien sunset after a three-year period.

Article V. Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA)

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

We urge that the Colorado Department of Agriculture budget should be fully funded.

We urge the Colorado Department of Agriculture to make annual inspections and tests on all licensed scales and grading or testing equipment.

We urge the Colorado Department of Agriculture to implement and fund a state meat inspection and grading system which would enable Colorado meat producers to market their products within the state without the required USDA inspection certifications.

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

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

We encourage the commissioner of agriculture to be a true voice for Colorado's family farmers and ranchers.

We call for a moratorium on the open-air planting of biopharmaceutical crops (crops grown for the production of pharmaceuticals and/or industrial chemicals) in Colorado because of the lack of knowledge of the possible effects on the environment, nearby crops and citizens, and an inadequate regulatory process. Further, we ask that the Colorado Department of Agriculture not approve any applications to grow these genetically modified crops.

Prior to the state of Colorado allowing the planting and or production of biopharmaceutical crops within the state, we demand that the commissioner of agriculture and Colorado legislators provide and require more independent research, public participation, and open records to the public regarding the proceedings, findings, and recommendations on research or further advancement of pharmaceutical crops.

We urge CDA to define the terms “farmers market” and “on-farm market.” We further encourage the CDA to support access to farmers markets and direct producer marketing efforts within the state of Colorado.

We demand that CDA enforce the Bee Caution Label.

A. Weights and Measures

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

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

B. Colorado Warehousing Act

We recommend that the CDA continue to monitor and enforce the Colorado Warehouse Act.

C. Colorado Agricultural Development Authority (CADA)

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

We demand full disclosure and accountability of all funds dispersed through CADA.

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

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

We support expanding the role of the Colorado Agricultural Development Authority to include a state loan program for renewable energy projects.

D. State Fair

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

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

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

Article VI. Cooperatives

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

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

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

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

Article VII. Conservation and Development Policy

A. Recycling

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

We support the use of modern cogeneration technology that uses waste as fuel.

We encourage the promotion of recycling and on-farm composting.

We encourage the development of regional recycling centers throughout the state.

We support the promotion and generation of at-home recycling pickup programs.

B. Wildlife Management

We encourage the Division of Parks and Wildlife (DPW) and farmers and ranchers to participate in the process of setting seasons and wildlife management objectives.

We support equitable damages being reimbursed by DPW for forage and crop losses, damages to fencing, etc., attributable to wildlife even if the landowner or lessee receives bounty or hunting fees on property.

We oppose compensation in cases where crops and associated structures are used primarily to attract and harvest wildlife.

We request legislative relief by permitting farmers and ranchers free licenses to hunt the legal limits on their own land, as is the practice in other states.

We support the habitat partnership program.

We oppose increasing wildlife populations at the expense of livestock grazing or to the detriment of the ecosystem.

We urge our state wildlife management agency to do its utmost to reduce the threat posed by chronic wasting disease.

We oppose wildlife management by ballot initiative.

We oppose the re-location of prairie dogs from urban to rural areas.

We support that the state of Colorado permit the use of Rozol and Kaput Prairie dog baits and other effective techniques for the eradication of prairie dogs.

We oppose the listing of any prairie dog as an endangered species as classified under the Endangered Species Act.

We support common-sense wildlife management practices administered by the Division of Wildlife.

C. Alternative Livestock and Non-Amenable Species (Bison, Elk and Deer)

We support the State Veterinarian’s authority over all livestock and alternative livestock disease issues.

We support the ranching of alternative livestock if it is properly regulated, managed, and licensed by the Department of Agriculture.

We request legislative support that all regulatory changes be based upon the best available science, facts, and evidence.

We oppose the Division of Parks and Wildlife having any authority over livestock and alternative livestock disease or movement issues.

We support the chronic wasting disease surveillance program for alternative livestock as regulated by the Department of Agriculture.

We oppose the management of any facet of the alternative livestock business by ballot initiative.

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

D. Noxious Weeds and Pests

We support formation of weed control districts across the state, including municipalities.

We urge stronger enforcement of state laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all lands. This would include federal lands, state and county highway rights-of-way, pasture land, recreation areas, and private housing and subdivision property. Dirt/soil hauled from one location to another should be free of noxious weeds and seeds.

We urge the Colorado state legislature to provide a funding mechanism for the control of noxious weeds and pests that prevents the elimination of plants that will adversely effect honey production.

We urge the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to plant appropriate native grasses along roadways.

E. Industrial Siting Act

We support enactment of an industrial siting act in Colorado that would include the following:

- Support for local land use control and the county land use commission in maintaining control of the location and development of heavy industry and mining development. It should be a location that will cause the least impact to agriculture and the rural environment.
- State agencies should assist local entities in minimizing the impact and use of prime agricultural land for such development through feasibility studies in order to determine the full impact of selected sites and development.
- We support a definitive procedure ensuring public information with respect to such proposed land development.
- We support a provision to encourage rural towns and communities, if desired, to acquire lands for industrial parks. These parks would be used as a method of controlling the scope and development of industry, which would aid in stabilizing local economies.

We urge our state government to offer incentives for these new industries to locate in rural areas.

We support present eminent domain laws that encourage the placing of power lines and gas pipelines on private, rather than public land. The eminent domain laws should be changed to give equal protection to private landowners.

F. Animal Welfare

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

We support humane treatment of all domesticated animals, and their right to have proper food, shelter and water for survival.

We oppose the regulation of domestic livestock and animal husbandry by ballot initiative.

We support reinstating USDA-inspected horse slaughter and processing.

G. Alternative Crops

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

We urge the Colorado legislature to legalize the production of industrial hemp as an alternative crop for agricultural producers.

Article VIII. Education and Social Policy

A. Medical Care

We support access to affordable medical, dental, vision and mental health services, as well as to long-term care and hospice care for all citizens.

We support a workable and affordable national universal health care plan to provide equal opportunity for adequate health care for all people. We support Universal Health Insurance for Colorado. We support a single-payer health system.

We support full implementation of recently adopted legislation that will end discrimination by limiting or denying benefits due to pre-existing conditions. We also support full implementation of recently adopted federal legislation to remove limits on benefits. We support the deductibility of premiums for small businesses and the self-employed.

We support the public and legislative educational work done by the Colorado Commission on Family Medicine to raise the issues of healthcare access and affordability in rural Colorado. We support the Colorado Provider Recruitment program, within the Colorado Rural Health Center, which assists rural and under-served communities in recruiting and retaining healthcare professionals.

We also support providing incentives for medical students who agree to serve in medically under-served areas after graduation.

We support investments in Colorado's loan repayment program, Colorado Health Service Corps, be maintained so that the resource is available for primary care providers serving rural and underserved areas.

We urge expanded use of physician assistants and/or nurse practitioners in areas whose populations cannot support a medical doctor.

We support federal and/or state funding for rural health clinics and emergency medical services in rural counties that have no medical services.

We support Rural Health Clinics and Community-Funded Safety Net Clinics as critical parts of Colorado's healthcare safety net system. We urge these entities be provided the same access to funding that is available to other safety net providers. RMFU will be an advocate for the inclusion of rural and community-funded safety net providers in the programs and services included in the Affordable Care Act.

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

We support lowering health costs through nutritional education, disease prevention and wellness promotion.

We encourage changing the Medicare Part A hospice benefit so that it is dependant upon physician certification rather than a specific time limit.

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

We oppose the practice of rate banding by healthcare companies, either by age or health status of employees.

We support the creation of regional healthcare co-ops – based on the model of electrical co-ops – to spread the burden of healthcare costs.

We urge state lawmakers crafting health insurance exchange legislation (a state-based marketplace where individuals and businesses will be able to compare and purchase health insurance) establish a system that is feasible, promotes access and care for rural Coloradans, and addresses their needs.

We urge efforts be made to ensure that rural Colorado be included as the state implements a Health Information Technology (HIT) system, as a means to use computers, computer network systems to store, protect, retrieve and transfer clinical, administrative and financial information electronically. RMFU urges state and federal legislation to eliminate gaps in incentive funding for Rural Health Clinics and Community-Funded Safety Net Clinics to obtain funds to establish the systems necessary to fully serve their patients with new information technology.

We support capital investment by the state to build and sustain the infrastructure for tele-medicine.

B. Education

We support adequate public funding of K-12 education and state supported post-secondary education systems of Colorado.

We support additional investment in secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs in Colorado to train young people as electricians, plumbers, welders, mechanics and similar professions needed in rural communities.

We support public funding for Colorado Experiment Stations and the Extension Service.

We support increased state funding for the school districts be earmarked for academic purposes.

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

We encourage developing alternatives to education funding systems that would reduce the reliance on property taxes.

We oppose the consolidation of rural school districts and community colleges within the state of Colorado.

We support adequate opportunities for local preschool child care and encourage common-sense approaches to solving any shortage.

We support the development of broadband capacity internet to be equitable to urban areas.

We oppose “vouchers” that would divert funding from public education to private schools.

C. Low Income Assistance Programs

RMFU supports allocating more general funds to the Colorado Property Tax/Rent/Heat rebate program authorized in statute to help low-income individuals and families, and directing assistance to low income seniors, especially those with financially debilitating health concerns. In addition, RMFU urges the legislature, prior to reinstatement of the state program providing a property tax exemption for seniors, to include an income means test to establish eligibility for a property tax exemption.

D. Homelessness

We encourage public, private, and nonprofit support in alleviating the crisis of homelessness in both rural and urban areas of the state.

E. Nutrition and Farmers Markets

We support a definition of farmers markets to say the following: “A farmers market is a public and recurring assembly of farmers or their employees, selling local agricultural products they have grown, raised, or produced, directly to consumers. Such markets may include other products which reasonably serve the public or enhance the market’s diversity.”

We urge implementation of the Farmers Market Nutrition program in Colorado.

We support implementation of a “Farm to School (Cafeteria)” program for the school lunch program.

We support food education programs such as Slow Food and local food and nutrition seminars.

We support the continuation and expansion of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to farmers markets in Colorado.

We support community supported agriculture/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer co-ops selling directly to restaurants, grocers, and festivals.

We support farmers markets and other local product initiatives.

The RMFU supports the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) and their goals:

- To benefit Colorado agriculturists and others involved in all aspects of agriculture
- To provide increased focus on economic development opportunities of Colorado’s food system
- To provide improvements to agricultural production
- To provide improvements to community well-being
- To provide improvements to public health

RMFU supports and promotes the development of the Colorado Proud program and encourages the use of the Colorado Proud logo by RMFU members.

F. Immigration

As immigration is a federal issue, RMFU opposes the adoption of programs like E-Verify at the state level. We endorse the principles of the Utah Compact (see page 17).

G. Department of Corrections

We support legislation that would reinstate the required response time of 55 minutes (under normal driving conditions) for essential personnel for state and private correctional facilities.

Article IX. Government Regulatory Policy

A. Transportation

We recommend passage of legislation that would allow weight variance permits for trucks with farm plates and farm fuel suppliers with commercial plates of up to 15 percent within 100-mile radius when no scale exists at the point of loading.

We oppose additional railroad mergers and abandonment of service.

We urge utilization of existing railroads and rail lines for a mass transit system.

RMFU supports increased Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards as it has wide-ranging benefits resulting from less fuel consumption.

We urge that licensure for commercial grain transport in Colorado be permanently extended to farmers.

B. Telephone and Internet Service

We direct the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to review the existing inequities of the different telephone patterns in rural communities and, where feasible, to help establish changes that would be more equitable to rural telephone customers.

We support regulation equalizing telephone and broadband internet access throughout the state. We are opposed to the deregulation efforts that could allow rural areas to be left without a carrier. Service providers that maintain telephone lines should be closely monitored and pricing kept comparable to metro areas.

C. Energy

We direct the Colorado State Legislature to instruct the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to re-open the current Rate Base and implement Performance-based Rates in Colorado.

We direct the Colorado State Legislature to instruct the PUC to prioritize energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy as prerequisites to approval of additional power generating facilities.

We direct the Colorado State Legislature to require that all power generation built outside of Colorado to serve the energy needs of Colorado must meet all state standards for emissions and performance standards.

We direct the Colorado State Legislature to reinstate Section 1 “legislative declaration of intent” of Amendment 37 into the PUC resource approval process.

We oppose the sale of any Power Marketing Authorities (PMA).

We oppose any deregulation of rural utilities and services that will increase rates.

We oppose the breaching of any dams generating electric power or providing agricultural water in Colorado.

D. Country-of-Origin Labeling

We urge the state of Colorado to pass enforceable country-of-origin labeling to govern all retail food.

E. Raw Milk

We support the statutory directives on the production and distribution of raw milk in the state. This minimal interference with the free market demand for farm fresh products will serve the best interests of consumers who desire this product and local dairies wishing to develop it.

We support the efforts by the Raw Milk Association of Colorado to establish testing standards and management practices for raw milk production.

F. Animal Identification

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

RMFU opposes any premise registration and electronic or biometric identification program that

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

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

RMFU believes Colorado has workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health.

G. Emissions

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

RMFU supports research in terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, no till, bio-char, and other proven conservation methods.

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

H. Food Safety

We demand enforcement of existing food-safety requirements and measures.

I. Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

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

RMFU will engage with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and other related state agencies regarding the adoption, modification and implementation of any rules and regulations on Confined Animal Feeding Operations in the state of Colorado.

Article X. Political Reform

We strongly support a constitutional amendment that requires a two-thirds threshold or higher for any future constitutional amendments to be adopted.

We urge the state legislature to require a geographic component of the statewide signature level for any ballot initiative.

We support removing the Gallagher, TABOR, and Amendment 23 provisions from the state constitution and returning tax and bud-

getting authority to the State Legislature, the Governor and other appropriate elected officials.

We oppose the passage of any amendments or laws that limit the effectiveness of elected officials or limit our use of the representative form of government.

We urge the adoption of public financing of all state and local campaigns.

NEW MEXICO POLICY 2012

Article I. Land and Water Policies

A. Noxious Weeds

We urge that the state of New Mexico Department of Highways be required and funded to control perennial noxious and poisonous weeds (particularly Field Bindweed, common Burdock and Johnson grass) along the state roadways.

We recommend the use of mite control for bindweed as tested at the Bushland, Texas Agriculture Science Research Center.

We urge the Natural Resource Conservation Service to enforce the control of weeds on the Conservation Reserve Program lands.

B. Land Commissioner

We support the continuation of an oversight board or authority over the office of State Land Commissioner, and we urge that it be structured so that it is responsive to the wishes of the people.

C. Water

We urge that all surface water compacts between New Mexico and other states be subject to review and possible re-negotiation in light of recent developments for irrigation and municipal water projects. Current restrictions on acre-footage to be held by the state should be adjusted to reflect these issues.

We support the development of the Ute Water Project.

We support efforts to remove salt cedar from all rivers, including the Pecos, Rio Grande and Canadian Rivers.

We recommend that ground water compacts be negotiated with other states to address any future claims upon aquifers and basins.

We support efforts by the state to research current and future water needs. We also endorse positions taken by the 22 water regions to adopt regional water plans for future utilization of water resources.

When ground water is to be transferred out of state, an impact assessment and public hearing should be held. We support the creation of a water trust fund to insure the state has adequate water resources and can defend its interests in lawsuits with neighboring states. Any losses incurred by New Mexico users should be fully compensated by the neighboring state or user that resides there.

We demand the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer not allow water to be monopolized by any entity and that it not eliminate permits for new drilling of water wells by surface rights owners.

We demand that waters wells not be allowed to be drilled horizontally and any that are would be plugged with the owner fined based upon the length of well usage and volume of water removed.

Water produced in the state of New Mexico will not be allowed to be transported outside of New Mexico. It must be put to beneficial use within the state of New Mexico.

When disputes over surface water arise between states, ground water users near stream flows should not be penalized for loss of downstream flow.

We oppose all initiatives to tax the use of water.

We oppose release of municipal or irrigation water in any reservoir for the silvery minnow, Arkansas shiner, or any other habitat.

We encourage the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer to use its statutory authority to investigate and enforce the priority call of agricultural waters, particularly on the Canadian River and its tributaries.

We oppose any efforts to divert agricultural use water to other uses without a full study, and/or payment for loss of use. Additionally, we oppose any attempt to reduce agricultural water use to a lower priority. Agriculture should be raised to second or third priority, with domestic use being first priority.

We recommend that standards be adopted to deal with possible environmental contamination by industrial and corporate farms.

We support the development of municipal water projects utilizing existing local reservoirs.

We oppose the removal of dams on any river or destruction of any reservoir.

We recognize the value, growth and importance of the dairy industry to New Mexico. It is critical that this industry be a responsible user and conserver of water resources. It is also essential that this industry exercise due care to protect groundwater resources.

We oppose efforts by the Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies to force local irrigation districts to release water from reservoirs for habitat preservation without an impact study and public hearing. Producers losing the use of this water should be justly compensated for loss of production.

We support the development of local water courts and mediation to settle adjudication claims.

We do not support the metering of domestic wells.

We do not support the reduction of domestic well production below three acre feet per year level.

D. Wastewater

We support the development of a fund for rural areas to give assistance with the mandated updating of septic tank disposal systems, and with bringing older systems up to code.

We support the reuse of municipal wastewater for agricultural purposes with proper permitting and treatment

E. Property Rights

We support property rights legislation on the state and federal level. Market or use value, whichever is greater should be paid in any "taking."

We oppose any efforts to implement state-wide planning or zoning.

We support Surface Rights protection.

We support air space remaining as a part of the surface right estate.

We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral development. Compensation to the surface owner should include but not limited to loss of production income, lost land value, lost access to surface owners' remaining land, including loss of improvements.

We support new transmission corridors if landowners are compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement, including the option to include a multi-year payment.

We do not support the use of eminent domain to transfer private property from a landowner to a for-profit or non-governmental entity

without the landowner having the right to negotiate a multi-year payment.

We do not support eminent domain proceedings for merchant projected corridors.

We encourage private property owners be part of transmission planning process.

We urge that a written agreement be in place prior to entry.

We oppose the mergers of city and county governments.

Article II. Energy Sources, Development and Conservation

The positive economic impact on agriculture and rural communities through expanded tax bases, reduced outward migration of rural populations, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, foreign oil, and traditional grain markets makes the continued development of viable renewable energy imperative. Therefore, we support and call for continued favorable legislation at the state and federal levels for the development of renewable energy resources.

We encourage members and the general public to support renewable energy resources.

We support the building of the Tres Amigas project, super conductor switching station in Curry County, New Mexico.

We support the focus of economic development efforts to build the infrastructure and secondary facilities for new energy development, and to allow Rural Electric Cooperatives to be part of the process.

We strongly encourage the use of renewable energy products in state, county and city vehicles.

We support allowing Rural Electric Associations (REA) to increase net metering for agricultural operations and rural businesses.

We support the creation of a Renewable Energy Trust Fund, funded by severance taxes from new oil and gas production.

We support a revolving loan for renewable energy economic development projects.

We urge information on carbon credit opportunities be made available to agricultural producers.

We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects which is tradable.

We support a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment and supplies.

We recommend that intra-state prices of natural gas be reduced to compare with interstate prices.

We support the installation, erection and operation of renewable energy systems with just compensation to the acreage owners.

We support oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

We support the monitoring of meters on oil and gas wells for purposes of severance tax collection.

Article III. Economic and Social Policies

A. Predators and Pests

We strongly support legal measures in the effort to restore effective predator control.

The judicious use of cyanide guns must be continued on federal, state, and private lands to control coyotes and wolves if this country

is to protect its livestock industry. Where the use of poison or cyanide guns are not viable, livestock guard dogs may be used in addition to other non-poison controls.

We oppose the Wolf Reintroduction Program.

We urge New Mexico State University to do research on non-poisonous pest and predator control means.

We urge the appropriation of federal funds to help control destructive birds because they are a serious crop and health hazard.

We urge control of destructive insects and rodents on state land adjacent to cropland, through the use of multiple resource methods, to encourage natural pollinators and beneficial wildlife.

B. Game and Fish

We urge the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to coordinate hunting seasons and area permitting to control nuisance and destructive wildlife.

We support legislation to allow farmers and ranchers to hunt the legal limits on their own land without a license.

C. Taxes

We support the current property tax program under which farmland is taxed on its ability to produce rather than on its sale value.

We recommend that the tax level be maintained at 33 1/3 percent of the assessed value.

Increased capital outlay costs should be paid for by taxes raised in an equitable fashion so that the burden will be borne by all segments of the economy.

We recommend that a broader and more equitable state tax base be formulated and that a halt be made to increasing ad valorem taxes.

We recommend that the state drop the sales or excise tax on farm machinery and agricultural production items.

We recommend that the mileage-use tax on farm trucks be eliminated, and a flat license fee be established and handled by the Motor Vehicle Department.

We support use of one-tenth of a percentage of taxes collected by municipalities being used for economic development. Specifically, funds generated should be allocated to local economic development corporations for local business and cooperative development

We support moving one-tenth of the economic development tax and designate it specifically for rural economic development.

We urge the state of New Mexico to make a \$3 million commitment to rural business and cooperative development from funds received from the settlement of the tobacco lawsuit.

D. Veterinarians

We urge New Mexico to establish a veterinary program. Until then, we urge New Mexico universities to work with other universities to accept more of our veterinary students. We encourage lottery monies to be used for tuition for veterinary students studying out of state due to the lack of an in-state program.

E. Trade

We support expanding trade of agricultural crops with Mexico and Cuba.

F. Banking

We urge credit unions be represented on the State Rural Banking Task Force.

G. Premise Registration and Animal Identification

We oppose any mandatory 4-H, FFA, or fair program designed to force livestock producers to register premises or animals in a system that is unnecessary and intrusive.

We believe New Mexico has workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health. The brand board and state veterinarians have necessary tools to track diseased livestock.

We oppose any premise registration that

- Is mandatory, and
- Establishes another level of regulation, with registering premises and/or animals, and
- Interferes with a producer's privacy and proprietary information, and
- Has the potential to undermine an open and competitive market system.

We believe that these programs have nothing to do with health and security.

H. Alternative Crops

We strongly support research and development by private and public efforts to create industrial uses and markets for products produced on our farms, and ethanol blended and bio-diesel fuels, medicines, protein supplements and cosmetics, as well as other innovative uses needed by industry.

We support the reintroduction of industrial hemp (defined as *Cannabis Sativa*), having one percent or less tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

We support research into the viability and economic potential of industrial hemp produced in the United States.

Article IV. Government and Agencies

A. Agricultural Services

We urge New Mexico Department of Agriculture to conduct a study of agricultural services in New Mexico with regard to the needs of rural people, the services available, and responsiveness of service agencies.

We urge that appropriate testing be made available for local areas for soil, crops, etc.

We oppose any efforts by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to force ditch irrigators to sign up their farms as dryland acres during an irrigation water shortage. Furthermore, we believe that producers should not have their irrigated base taken away due to unnatural lake, river and stream conditions.

We oppose the burden of record keeping for hay and grain producers for bio-terrorism on hay when other safe-guards are already in place.

B. Secretary of Agriculture

We favor a system where the governor, rather than the Board of Regents, appoints the secretary of agriculture.

We support moving the state office from Las Cruces to Santa Fe.

C. Gun Control

We support all firearm education safety courses and safe and legal use of firearms.

We oppose gun confiscation laws imposed upon U.S. citizens by any local, state or federal agency. We oppose the ban on semiautomatic weapons.

We support strict enforcement of existing laws.

D. Right to Work

We believe the right-to-work laws should be a state prerogative.

We oppose any common situs picketing bill.

We demand that employers be able to recover the cost of defending themselves when being falsely accused by employees of practices such as but not limited to harassment, discrimination, race, age, sex, etc.

E. State Education

We support a fair and equitable formula for distributing state education funds.

We support agriculture education, home economics, vocational-technical training programs, and other occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our free, public educational system.

We oppose the implementation of school vouchers.

We support continuance of the Perkins Act.

We oppose diversion of principal from the permanent state fund for education.

F. Utilities

We oppose any utility deregulation or regulation that results in higher cost to consumers.

G. International Relations

We oppose the construction of the "Border Fence" between Mexico and the United States.

H. Food Safety

We support increased food safety and security with additional testing especially of foreign-produced products.

We encourage the development of an increased supply, distribution and quality of New Mexico foods.

We encourage the increase of economic opportunities for rural and underserved communities working to improve their food purchasing options while expanding markets for farming and ranching families and renovating local economic activity for food aggregation, wholesale, and retail development while providing healthy and safe food.

WYOMING POLICY 2012

Article I. Water

A. Water Law

We encourage the wise use and conservation of underground water between states. We oppose the backdating of water rights.

We resolve that the Wyoming State Legislature prohibit the transfers in use of any existing agricultural water rights to commercial and industrial uses. We recommend that the sale of adjudicated irrigation water be limited to agricultural uses. We are opposed to allowing holders of water rights to sell any or part of this water for nonagricultural uses. We oppose all actions to take water now being used for agricultural purposes.

We oppose any privately held water rights being used for instream flow purposes.

B. Utilization of Water

We urge the limited remaining water resources allocated to the state of Wyoming be developed under law for beneficial use in the state, with special emphasis upon maximizing reservoir storage of surface water.

We recognize the desirability of protecting the high quality of our waters and assuring their suitability for beneficial uses, and support legislation to do so.

We urge the state of Wyoming to encourage and assist in the development of economically feasible innovative technology and incentives oriented toward efficient uses of the waters in this state when it does not injure vested water rights.

We support the concept of storing and using all unappropriated Wyoming water within the state in accordance with existing Wyoming water law.

We oppose granting underground or other supplemental water rights to land where the surface water rights have been sold.

C. Water Project Funding

We urge additional funding be set aside in Water Development accounts for water projects.

D. North Platte River

We urge that the proposed enlargement of water storage as part of the Platte River Cooperative Agreement on the North Platte River and its tributaries be completed.

E. Municipal Water

Wyoming municipalities and schools should be required to submit a report to the State Board of Control on the amount of water used to irrigate park grounds, right-of-ways and roadways, and urged to consider using gray water and dry-land grasses instead of irrigated grasses where feasible.

F. Water Quality

Water produced in Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) development must meet existing state water quality standards for surface water discharge.

Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with CBM water must be established to protect adjacent landowners.

We support existing water quality standards effecting agriculture, livestock and wildlife and feel no changes are necessary.

Article II. Land Use

Wyoming statutes provide for comprehensive planning and zoning on a countywide basis, covering unincorporated areas. The following statutory revisions should be made by the Wyoming Legislature:

- Planning and zoning decisions should be made as close to the people affected as possible.
- Prohibit the state from preempting local decision-making except where land use is clearly not just a local concern.
- Although we recognize the need for industrial expansion and the purchase of land for industry, we strongly oppose the acquisition of productive agricultural land for non-agricultural uses.

Article III. Minerals

A. Mineral Rights

We recommend that 25-year time limits be established on ownership of severed mineral rights, including those retained by the state. After this period, mineral rights ownership shall revert to the surface owner in all cases where present production of minerals is not occurring.

We urge that the decision to allow mining and oil companies the use of private lands should lay with the surface owner, and in all cases, compensatory payments should be made to the landowner for all damages incurred.

B. Leases

We support changes in existing law to require prior consent be obtained from surface rights owners before a lease may be acquired by mineral companies to develop minerals.

Article IV. Oil and Gas

We urge caution in the development of Coal-Bed Methane and request all available technology be used in development and reclamation of products and by-products.

Article V. Conservation

A. Recycling

The state should encourage all forms of recycling by requiring a deposit on all non-biodegradable recyclable materials.

We support a statewide recycling project.

B. Noxious Weed Control

We demand stronger enforcement of state laws to control declared noxious weeds and pests and require each county to control declared noxious weeds and pests on all lands, with stiff penalties for noncompliance.

We request the re-establishment of a "state cost share" to aid in controlling prairie dogs and/or noxious weeds.

C. Game and Fish Department

We request that the State Game and Fish Department be prohibited from introducing or transplanting predatory animals within the state.

We ask that the trespass laws be strictly enforced. We oppose the direct purchase of agricultural land by the Game and Fish Commission; instead they should look into leasing and/or buying easements.

We urge that landowners who allow hunting be compensated for forage by wildlife and habitat utilized on private land compensation

should be based on herd numbers and paid on average animal/unit/month values.

We urge that game coupons be retained.

We urge the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to properly protect Wyoming's ungulate wildlife resources from the ever-increasing threat of chronic wasting disease and brucellosis.

We urge the Game and Fish Commission to compensate private landowners/lessees for wolf predation of livestock and animals guarding livestock in areas where the wolf is classified the same as other trophy game animals.

D. Endangered Species Act

We support state authorization of listings under the Endangered Species Act.

We support using creditable scientific data in the listing process under the Endangered Species Act.

We support the delisting of the grizzly bear and all wolf species as specified in the ESA by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

We support keeping prairie dogs off the endangered species list.

We oppose the listing of the Preble's Jumping Mouse.

Article VI. Education Policy

We recommend the continuation of an elected school board from sub-district areas.

We support the organization of a Farmers Union local for youth at the University of Wyoming.

At all levels of education, we stress the primacy of academics over athletics.

When state school funding reductions are necessary, local districts need to be able to identify their own areas of cutbacks.

All state education programs mandated for local districts by the state of Wyoming must have accompanying funding.

We urge local input be considered when adopting statewide assessments.

We urge all schools to offer a strong agriculture and vocational education curriculum.

We encourage a statewide mill levy to support community colleges.

We recommend testing at the local level be recognized as a measure of proficiency to guarantee that Wyoming state standards and benchmarks are met.

Article VII. Tax Policy

A. Ad Valorem Taxes

We urge the continuation of the gas tax credit for agricultural production. Agricultural operations should be allowed a five-year average to meet the dollar criteria in qualifying for the credit.

We support a fuel tax increase with current exemptions in place, with the requirement that part of the funding raised go to the county farm-to-market road system.

We are opposed to a state income tax for Wyoming.

We oppose a property tax exemption for business and business investment in the free enterprise system made by churches and religious groups.

We encourage railroads to pay county property taxes to assist in funding fire protection.

We demand the state of Wyoming review its assessment procedures to reflect verifiable production figures, not company self-assessments.

We urge the abolishment of payment of taxes under protest.

B. Wyoming Inheritance Tax

We oppose a state inheritance and/or estate tax.

Until such time as these taxes are abolished, we urge tax reform that will allow the value of farm and grazing lands to be based on the productivity of such lands for gift and inheritance tax purposes.

C. Sales and Use Tax

We believe that noncommercial sales should be exempt from collecting state sales tax.

We ask the legislature to exempt agricultural parts and supplies from sales tax.

We propose that personal property tax be abolished on agricultural equipment.

We strongly support the exemption of farm equipment from sales tax.

D. Vehicle Registration

Taxes and licensing requirements on seasonal-use farm vehicles should correspond with length of time in use.

We urge motor vehicle registration more accurately reflect actual values of older vehicles.

We oppose any increase any increase in vehicle registration fees until a fuel tax increase is imposed.

E. Severance Tax

We support severance and mineral taxes.

Article VIII. Political Involvement

We urge Farmers Union members to work closely with the governor and state legislature on issues pertaining to agriculture.

Article IX. Unity

We believe that all farm organizations should work as closely together as possible to accomplish the goals of agriculture.

Article X. Workmen's Compensation

We strongly urge that workmen's compensation for farmers and ranchers continue to be optional.

Article XI. Waste

We oppose the importation of all waste into Wyoming.

Article XII. Warehouse Law

The issuance of warehouse receipts should be mandatory, and the warehouse receipts should post all handling, cleaning and storage charges, pro-rated on actual tare and purity as well as all other information now required by Wyoming law.

We encourage the legislature to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the stored commodities shall remain the property of the

owners that delivered the commodities for storage in the case of bankruptcy of the warehouse.

We also recommend warehouses be required to issue warehouse receipts no later than 45 days from the date of original delivery as shown by scale tickets or upon request. The scale delivery tickets should be considered proof of ownership until sale or the warehouse receipt has been issued. Warehouse receipts shall be issued on all producer-owned commodities prior to leaving the state. When a warehouse certifies itself as empty, an automatic audit will be triggered regardless of whether the license is renewed or not.

We demand that commodities stored in warehouses be inspected bi-annually for quality as well as quantity, and more frequently and unannounced as deemed necessary.

Article XIII. Grain Indemnity Fund

We oppose any grain indemnity fund.

Article XIV. State Land and Investment Board

We recommend the State Land and Investment Board (SLIB) continue making direct real estate loans to producers.

We urge the SLIB to allow irrigation loans to finance renewable energy power systems for irrigation practices.

We urge continued support of Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan programs.

We oppose the sale of state school lands. Any sale of state land shall be scrutinized in regard to maintaining a balance, both geographically and economically.

We recognize that the state trust lands are not “public lands” and the public has no inherent right to access.

All users should have fees established for use of state school trust lands.

We urge that current lessees maintain their preferential right on their current lease.

Article XV. Economic Development

We welcome economic development that complements our present economic base rather than jeopardizes it.

We ask the legislature to provide incentives for rural communities to establish agricultural commodities and bio-fuels processing within the state.

We urge the state’s economic development efforts be directed toward small community projects.

We urge economic development in Wyoming be focused on attracting clean industries, paying a living wage.

Article XVI. Livestock Regulations - Wyoming Livestock Board

We urge state livestock regulations be amended to require owner notification before mis-shipped livestock are sold.

We recommend landowners be able to file security interests against livestock to collect pasture and feed debt.

We urge brand inspection on sheep be repealed when a more efficient method of ownership determination and predator fee assessment can be developed and implemented.

We oppose the undue burden placed on livestock producers in the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) of northwest Wyoming by the requirement of testing for brucellosis.

We urge the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to rewrite brucellosis rules remove *Brucella abortus* from the select agent list to reflect lessened human health risks.

We oppose the loss of a state’s “brucellosis-free” status based only on infections traced and proven to be from wildlife.

Producers’ fees for brand inspection should be set at a level to cover actual brand inspection program costs and not general administration, disease prevention or trace back costs.

Any state beef check-off administered and collected under the Wyoming Livestock Board statutes must meet the following requirements:

- All collections on sales will have a provision for refund.
- Be approved by a majority of producers voting on the referendum by mail, with spouses allowed to vote individually.
- Disbursement of funds collected and operations of the program are controlled by boards of producers elected by the producers assessed.
- Major and significant changes in existing check-off programs should be submitted to the producers affected and subject to approval by a two-thirds vote.
- Programs being formulated or currently in operation be subject to a five-year review.

Article XVII. Damage Notification Requirements

People causing and law enforcement officers investigating damage to property, should be required to notify landowners of the damage and parties found guilty of causing the damage be required to pay the damage.

Article XVIII. Mediation Service

We support mediation between disputing parties to reach workable agreements.

Article XIX. State Legislative Proceedings

We support recording all votes and legislative proceedings, including committee meetings, floor debates, and interim hearings.

Article XX. Conflict of Interest

We support legislation defining conflict of interest for legislators and elected officials.

Article XXI. Landowner Reimbursement

We support full landowner and fire district reimbursement for damages and fire suppression costs on both public and private properties caused by the railroads.

Article XXII. Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) Funding

We support funding of WDA at a level to meet their statutory duties and provide comparable wage levels to other state employees.

Article XXIII. Excess State Revenues

We support all excess state revenues being deposited in the Permanent Mineral Trust Fund in absence of a rebate to the citizens.

Article XXIV. Alternative Energy

We support renewable energy production within Wyoming.

We support a renewable portfolio standard for Wyoming.

We encourage state-assisted community-sized bio-fuels development and production.

We support renewable energy developmental and storage rights remaining with surface rights.

We support reserving a percentage of the capacity of any publicly funded transmission line for power generated from renewable sources.

We urge new transmission line routes be sited to maximize wind power opportunities.

We support state research into alternative crops for bio-fuels use.

We encourage the individual or cooperative development and ownership of wind energy and co-generation production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursements to landowners.

We support terrestrial sequestration of carbon, where safety and stability can be assured.

We strongly support the ownership of pore space remaining with the surface owner.

Article XXV. Health Care Reform

We oppose Wyoming joining in the legal action seeking to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

RMFU SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

WHEREAS the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives,

AND WHEREAS cooperatives have provided tremendous opportunities for farmers and ranchers world-wide,

AND WHEREAS cooperatives offer to all nations the potential for developing self-sustaining food systems to eradicate poverty and alleviate hunger,

AND WHEREAS National Farmers Union through its affiliates nationwide has been instrumental in the establishment and growth of cooperatives of many types,

AND WHEREAS farmers and ranchers nationwide have benefitted greatly from the opportunities cooperatives have provided, from the electrification of rural America to providing fuel and fertilizer and enhancing marketing options for commodities,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the duly elected delegates of the 103rd Annual Convention of Rocky Mountain Farmers Union hereby endorse and support the International Year of Cooperatives.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that RMFU applauds the continuing efforts of the RMFU Cooperative Development Center to assist existing and develop new cooperatives throughout Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that RMFU will work with cooperatives and other organizations to publicize and celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives throughout 2012.

RMFU GOOD OF THE ORDER CHILD LABOR REGULATIONS

Child Labor Regulations, Orders and Statements of Interpretation:

RMFU will move quickly to review the proposed changes to the national child labor laws, inform members with recommended action, and comment to the Department of Labor in the best interests of family farmers and ranchers.

RMFU SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESPONSIBLE FARM POLICY

WHEREAS agricultural markets behave differently than economic theory predicts, and international trade cannot solve the problem of low, long-term farm income because countries will always strive to maintain an over-supply of domestically produced food to protect their national security,

AND WHEREAS increasing price volatility for both agricultural commodities and inputs is driving family farmers and ranchers, whose farms and ranches are crucial to our nation's food security and to the health of our rural communities, out of business,

AND WHEREAS farm support programs provide assistance to producers when commodity prices are low, and provide risk management and disaster assistance,

AND WHEREAS conservation programs provide farmers and ranchers with tools to protect our nation's fragile eco-system; rural development programs create economic growth in rural communities; and energy programs support development of the new energy economy in rural America,

AND WHEREAS education and research opportunities have led to a growth in local food systems and organic and natural food production, creating new marketing opportunities for producers,

AND WHEREAS food processing and retailing market continue to concentrate power into the hands of a few multinational corporations, in spite of efforts to protect the farmer and rancher from predatory market tactics and protect the consumer from price manipulation,

AND WHEREAS although American consumers enjoy the safest, most abundant and affordable food supply in the world, economic hardship makes hunger a rising problem in America, especially among children,

AND WHEREAS funding for 37 programs enacted as part of the current farm bill, including programs in renewable energy, conservation, rural development, horticulture and organic agriculture, will expire at the end of fiscal year 2012, and permanent disaster programs will expire at the end of the fiscal year 2011, resulting in a structural funding shortage for the next farm bill,

AND WHEREAS bi-partisan leadership of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees has called for no more than a \$23 billion reduction in farm bill spending over the next ten years and the farm bill baseline has been eroded since passage of the last farm bill by reductions in program spending, most notably the \$4 billion subtracted as a result of the 2011 Standard Reinsurance Agreement,

AND WHEREAS the next food and farm bill will be an invaluable opportunity for the federal government to invest wisely in the future of agriculture, energy, conservation, food security, rural development and rural America, even though financial resources may be limited,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the next farm bill include a farm safety net for producers providing stability for family farmers and ranchers in times of low agricultural commodity prices and/or low production; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that crop insurance should be a primary component of that safety net, with more effective risk management products available for producers, regardless of crop type or geographic region, with insurance products that can protect against changes in the cost of production, and with no reduction in the premium subsidy level provided to producers, and that insurance that covers catastrophic losses not qualify for federal disaster program eligibility; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the farm bill safety net should protect farmers and ranchers against catastrophic losses due to natural disasters, by combining elements of the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) and federal crop insurance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the next farm bill continue to fund nutrition and food assistance programs, to maintain school breakfast and lunch programs, to support local food systems including farmers markets, and to fund education and research in all areas of agricultural production, including organic and natural food production and best practices for converting to organic agriculture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the next farm bill should maintain conservation programs to help family farmers and ranchers preserve and enhance our natural resources, to develop greater domestic energy sources and to invest in our rural infrastructure for economic growth; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the next farm bill should mandate the United States Department of Agriculture to fully implement the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) rule to protect producers from the misuse of market power and consolidation in all livestock markets, and further, the next farm bill should call on the Department of Justice to take immediate action to enforce our nation's anti-trust laws; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding for the next farm bill should not be reduced any more than \$23 billion over the next ten years as proposed by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

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