

2019 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Policy

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1 **Article I. Government Programs**

2 **A. National Food and Farm Policy**

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

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

12
13 We support referring to the “Farm Bill” as the “Farm and Food Bill” and advocating for such in our national
14 conversations.

15
16 We support:

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

31
32 We urge a continued evaluation of the regulations for the Food Safety Modernization Act, to rationally
33 address the practice of organic, natural, and diversified farm operations vital to the local food economy.

34
35 We urge the requirements and fees be scaled with a focus on the difference between corporate and family
36 agriculture and remove from the regulations the needless elements that serve the purposes of corporate
37 agriculture at the expense of family farms, sovereign nations, growers of local foods, and consumers.

38
39 We encourage the FDA to promptly issue a Guidance Document to specifically, rationally address
40 application of raw manure as a biological soil amendment consistent with the National Organic Program
41 (NOP) standards.

42
43 We encourage FDA to develop adequate training requirements for qualified auditors under the Preventive
44 Controls regulation.

45
46 We urge Congress provide appropriate funding to support the implementation of the Food Safety

1 Modernization Act (FSMA) and Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

3 **B. Farm Program Recommendations**

4 **Parity**

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

8 **The Concept of Parity**

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

16 **Parity as a Measurement**

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

20 **The Goal of Parity**

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

25 **Future Farm Programs**

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

30 We urge future farm programs to include income support mechanisms.

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

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

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

1
2 We strongly support establishing and funding programs within the agencies of USDA that would aid
3 beginning farmers/ranchers in their effort to become full-time producers.

4
5 We urge that any reduction in agricultural program spending such as the \$4 billion reduction in spending on
6 crop insurance in 2010 be recognized as an agricultural contribution to reducing the budget deficit.

7
8 We urge that any reduction in any federal agricultural programs be reallocated and committed to fund
9 improvement in the permanent disaster program, commodity support program, the risk management
10 program, or funding for conservation, renewable energy and/or rural development programs.

11
12 We support limits on farm program payments.

13 14 **Organics & “Natural” Foods**

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

19
20 We urge the USDA National Organic Program to adhere to the intent and integrity of the National Organic
21 Standards, and that the National Organic Standards Board continues to have full authority over materials
22 allowed or prohibited in the organic production and handling.

23
24 We urge the USDA National Organics Program to consider financial and technical support programs for
25 producers transitioning land into certified organic production going through the three-year transition
26 requirement.

27
28 We support efforts to develop uniform national definitions and standards for any food that is labeled natural.

29 30 **C. Urban Agriculture**

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

33
34 We support urban agricultural operations educating and informing consumers about local and regional
35 agricultural production.

36
37 We support the intent of “The Urban Agriculture Act of 2016”.

38
39 We support municipalities adopting comprehensive rules to enable agriculture production inside city limits
40 (i.e. zoning permitting and ag vehicle licensing).

41
42 We support adding agriculture as a permitted use in all types of zoning.

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

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

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

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

10 11 **D. Risk Management**

12 **1. Federal Crop Insurance**

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

- 14 ➤ Recognize federal crop insurance is not an effective substitute for other agricultural safety-net
15 policies or programs;
- 16 ➤ Do not penalize producers that use nontraditional crops and/or rotations by insuring crops with
17 increased premiums and lower coverage;
- 18 ➤ Are consistent with, and complement the goal of improving, short and long-term family farm and
19 ranch economic sustainability;
- 20 ➤ Provide equitable and adequate whole farm coverage levels at affordable prices for a broader range
21 of commodities including, fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops or production techniques and
22 in all geographic regions;
- 23 ➤ Effectively cover small, diversified beginning farmers and ranchers and eliminates barriers for them
24 to participate in the program;
- 25 ➤ Encourage innovation to improve and develop risk management tools such as dollar per-acre
26 coverage and revenue products for the livestock and dairy sectors;
- 27 ➤ Provide coverage for producers that are diversifying with non-traditional crops not covered by NAP
28 for the first three years. The coverage would be for direct input costs only but would not replace
29 retroactive claims after the three-year waiting period.
- 30 ➤ Recognize that short term financial soundness should not be the sole determinant in establishing
31 types of coverage, insurance levels or rates;
- 32 ➤ Eliminate penalties for un-harvested production for all crops;
- 33 ➤ Risk Management Agency (RMA) eligibility should consider “Acts of God” prior to requiring
34 compliance of the conservation plan.

35
36 We recommend that farmers relying on irrigation not be penalized by being forced to sign up crop acreage
37 as dry land instead of irrigated land due to an “Act of God.”

38
39 We recommend coverage based on actual production history (A.P.H.) where available; for cases without
40 A.P.H., the transitional yield cannot be lower than county Farm Service Agency yields. Additionally, we
41 urge the establishment of A.P.H. yield floors to protect the producer in the event of successive disasters.
42 This floor cannot be lower than FSA yields. We support Crop Insurance that makes available up to 100
43 percent coverage levels.
44

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

3
4 We urge limiting risk management audits of farm records to seven years of production history, regardless of
5 crop rotation.

6
7 We urge RMA to expand crops that are covered under Federal Crop Insurance.

8
9 We request RMA reevaluate the rules and practices of existing covered crops and additional covered crops.

10
11 We support crop insurance settlements based on cost of production not Board of Trade prices.

12
13 We support RMA, using weather data where available on a section basis to assess moisture availability
14 (rainfall and snowmelt) for crop production, in determination of prevented crop planting or crop losses. Risk
15 management rules should not penalize producers for using locally recommended conservation measures.

16
17 We support the creation of a new federal risk management insurance pool to provide broad liability
18 coverage to cooperatives and individuals who wish to market their products directly to consumers.

19
20 We oppose any surcharge to farming practices after an organic A.P.H. is established.

21
22 We oppose the RMA allowing crop insurance premium discounts about specific crop inputs offered by a
23 single company.

24 25 **2. Disaster Programs**

26 We support a fully funded permanent disaster assistance program.

27
28 We support USDA ad hoc disaster direct payments to landowners in exceptional drought as we recognize
29 drought as a natural disaster.

30 31 **3. Conservation**

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

34
35 We support stacking benefits with regards to conservation and energy programs.

36
37 We encourage conservation programs to provide flexibility for tribal communities.

38 39 **4. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

40 We support flexibility in the CRP program that reflects local environmental conditions as determined by the
41 local FSA county committee, the NRCS office and the local conservation district.

42
43 We endorse the effort to preserve and protect our more fragile farmland, and to restore the health of native
44 grasslands through BEST management practices that utilize CRP lands in rotational grazing systems.

45
46 We support the landowners'/operators' right to rebid the contract for an additional term at the same rate or a

1 rate adjusted for inflation.

2
3 We support allowing enrollees to manage permanent vegetative cover to enhance wildlife habitat and
4 ecosystem health.

5
6 We favor managed haying and grazing of CRP stands for maintaining the health of the grass species and
7 minimizing fire hazard.

8
9 We support controlling noxious weeds, pests and undesirable plants on land in the CRP program.

10
11 We also support a complete re-classification of noxious weeds so that it reflects the beneficial use of such
12 plants to pollinators.

13 14 **5. Conservation Security Program (CSP₁)**

15 We support funding and full compliance of the Conservation Security Program contracts written and signed
16 under the guidelines of the 2014 Farm Bill.

17 18 **6. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP₂)**

19 We support implementation of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP₂) provisions of the 2008 Farm
20 Bill as a full, nationwide and unrestricted program. No reduction or limiting structures or schemes should be
21 instituted in contradiction to the intent of Congress.

22
23 We urge implementation of CSP₂ in a manner that recognizes conservation practices appropriate to different
24 climatic regions and provides such agricultural production practices to be adequately scored by the
25 Conservation Management Tool (CMT).

26 27 **7. Cost Share Programs Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife 28 Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)**

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

31
32 We support the continuation of cost share programs that:

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

38
39 We support the establishment of a new tiered EQIP funding mechanism specifically designed for small and
40 beginning farming and ranching operations.

41
42 We oppose producers being penalized for non-compliance with program requirements resulting from “Acts
43 of God” such as drought, fire and floods.

44 45 **8. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

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

1
2 **9. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

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

4
5 We support the continuation of NRCS snow surveys and SNOW TELEMETRY (SNOTEL) measuring
6 stations.

7
8 We encourage NRCS to train cost share service providers to work with young and beginning farmers and
9 ranchers and nontraditional farm enterprises.

10
11 **10. Wool and Mohair Program**

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

13
14 **11. Sugar Program**

15 We support the continuation of the Sugar Program.

16
17 We urge close collaboration with the sugar beet grower's associations.

18
19 **12. Honey Loan Program**

20 We support the Honey Loan Program.

21
22 **13. Livestock Indemnification Program**

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

25
26 **E. Labeling**

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

29
30 We support education of consumers regarding labeling of foods with regards to additives and genetically
31 modified and engineered organisms.

32
33 We oppose misleading, inaccurate, and vague label language.

34
35 We urge agricultural products be labeled accurately, and that agricultural product descriptions serve to
36 educate and inform the consumer.

37
38 We urge the development of certifiable and verifiable "Grass-fed" labeling standards that are regulated in a
39 manner similar to "Organic."

40
41 We support reinstatement, full funding and compliance with mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL).

42
43 All labeling costs associated with determining and marketing foreign country-of-origin products (not born,
44 raised and processed in the United States) shall be paid by the importers.

45
46 In absence of mandatory COOL, the same labeling standards outlined in M-COOL should be maintained to

1 benefit producers and consumers in any voluntary program. Imported food should carry a quality grade label
2 consistent with domestically-produced foods and country-of-origin label.

3
4 We favor clear and mandatory uniform federal labeling standards, for genetically modified organisms
5 (GMOs) in all food. In the absence of a mandatory standard, we support a clear and voluntary uniform
6 federal standard.

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

10
11 We support labeling with respect to food additives and irradiation.

12
13 We support FDA efforts to redefine “healthy” to align with new nutrition facts labeling regulations and
14 current nutritional science.

15
16 We encourage the FDA to continually update and evaluate the regulations of the 1958 Food Additives
17 Amendment to ensure that safe ingredients are permitted to be used in food, and that unsafe ingredients are
18 prohibited.

19
20 We support labeling of organic products in accordance with the National Organic Standards Food
21 Production Act.

22
23 We support the prosecution of individuals or entities who knowingly sell or import nonorganic products as
24 certified organic.

25
26 We urge the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to amend its regulations to require that all
27 meat/poultry labeled as “natural” be required to be sourced from animals that were not administered growth
28 hormones or sub- therapeutic antibiotics, and for all “natural” products to be third party verified.

29
30 We support requiring any laboratory produced product to be labeled as laboratory or industrially produced.

31
32 The rights of both GMO and non-GMO producers should be respected as appropriate regulatory agencies
33 continue to research and evaluate these concerns. Including but not limited to required consumer labeling
34 for foods made from or containing GMO’s.

35 36 **F. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

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

40
41 All positions in all divisions within the Department should be fully staffed, and staff administering federal
42 farm programs should be fully informed and trained before enrollment periods begin.

43
44 We urge streamlining the application, reporting and certification processes for federal grants, and processes
45 should be consistent in all state offices.

1 **G. Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

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

5
6 We are against further downsizing within the FSA and other USDA agencies as it is detrimental to rural
7 America and the ability of the agencies to fulfill their mission.

8
9 We oppose county office consolidation and we demand each county have adequate funding, staffing and
10 training to provide good service to the agriculture community.

11
12 We strongly urge the continuation and strengthening of the state, county and community committee system
13 for farm program administration.

14
15 We urge that program announcement dates be timely regarding cropping seasons for agriculture operations
16 and strictly adhered to.

17
18 We urge that Farm Service Agency loan programs allow cooperative equity stock to serve as collateral for
19 farmer investment in new cooperatives.

20
21 We urge the Farm Service Agency to include programs that incentivize and support beginning farmers and
22 ranchers, and small, diversified agricultural operations.

23
24 We urge FSA to support farming practices, that have been proven, that help improve our soils and
25 conservation practices.

26
27 FSA should always consider preventive plant acres in revenue calculations as it pertains to, but not limited
28 to farm safety net programs, risk management programs and disaster programs.

29
30 We strongly encourage the FSA to digitize their application process into an online format.

31
32 **H. Cooperative Financing**

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

35
36 **I. Federal Grading and Inspections**

37 We urge all imported meat and other foods federally inspected under U.S. health laws carry an “imported
38 and inspected” label. All imported foods that don’t meet USDA or FDA standards should not be allowed
39 into the United States.

40
41 We support inspection of all meats, either domestic, imported, or non-amenable (bison, deer, elk or other
42 exotic species), to ensure such products meet all state or USDA regulations and standards.

43
44 We strongly support hiring additional USDA inspectors to conduct these required inspections. The USDA
45 grading and inspection services necessary for food quality and safety should be tailored to meet the needs of
46 individuals and cooperatives. There should be no charge for these services.

1
2 We urge continued federal funding of the meat-grading program and oppose any privatization of meat-
3 inspection services.

4
5 We support marketing of state-inspected meats from current state-licensed and inspected plants, across state
6 lines to individuals, retailers, or food service outlets, when state meat inspections meet or surpass federal
7 regulations.

8
9 We urge USDA to establish simplified and minimal paperwork and record keeping requirements for small
10 USDA inspected meat packing plants to meet compliance.

11
12 We urge that an independent commission be established where small plants can appeal directives from the
13 inspection and compliance division of the USDA meat inspection service.

14
15 We support standardizing the federal laws to determine moisture content allowance of all meat products.

16
17 Any water added during processing must be plainly labeled.

18
19 We support mandatory recall authority for the FDA and the USDA.

20
21 We oppose assessing any user fees for federal meat inspection services, including inspection of non-
22 amenable species.

23 24 **J. Agricultural Labor and Immigration**

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

27
28 We urge Congress to work on reforming and enforcing immigration law in the interest of homeland
29 security, rural economies, and labor needs in agriculture.

30
31 We encourage any people seeking permanent residence in the United States to apply for citizenship with all
32 the rights and responsibilities that accompany citizenship.

33
34 We urge a comprehensive overhaul of immigration policy that provides a sensible path forward for
35 immigrants who are here without legal status and are committed to becoming fully participating members of
36 our society.

37
38 We urge the adoption of federal immigration legislation with an agricultural worker program that provides
39 work authorization for the experienced and consistent farm labor force with visas of adequate length to meet
40 the diverse needs of agriculture and meet the security needs of the United States.

41
42 We oppose the adoption of a mandatory E-Verify program without the inclusion of a workable agricultural
43 worker program.

44
45 We support programs such as ALBA (Agriculture and Land Based Training Association) for career path and
46 progression among documented immigrant farm laborers.

1
2 We support federal Ag JOBS legislation which provides access to a consistent, legal supply of seasonal
3 workers to meet the needs of agriculture.

4
5 We urge expediting and streamlining the process to allow approved immigrant workers to travel back and
6 forth from their home country.

7
8 We urge streamlining the regulatory process or replacing the H2A program with a guest worker program
9 that serves the needs of family farmers and ranchers.

10 11 **K. Federal School Breakfast and Lunch Program**

12 We urge the government to purchase an increased amount of domestically produced agricultural products
13 for use in school meals programs wherever possible.

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

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

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

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

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

30
31 We encourage Congress to fund, strengthen, and expand farm to school and other institution programs.

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

35
36 We encourage farm to school partnerships to increase consumption of nutritious and/or traditional foods
37 while also supporting farmers and ranchers.

38
39 We encourage the use of Standard Administrative Expenses (SAE) funding to support Farm to School
40 Programs.

41
42 We urge the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act and oppose block grant funding of the Act.

43 44 **L. Federal Public Lands**

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

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

1. Management of Lands

We support a workable plan, whereby our federal lands are sustained in a responsible manner in the multi-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.

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

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

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

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

We support federal laws currently banning any public entity (including municipalities 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 allotments, management issues, and disputes.

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

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

3
4 We oppose regulations that mandate the removal of a permittees livestock during an administrative appeal
5 process.

6
7 We oppose governmental agencies taking and disposing of private property, including livestock, prior to
8 being heard in the courts, a judgment being rendered and with appeals exhausted.

9
10 We oppose allowing non-grazers to bid up the price of an allotment thus denying access to moderate-income
11 families.

12
13 We oppose separating water from existing leases.

14
15 We oppose the renewed efforts of the Forest Service and BLM to reduce and or eliminate domestic sheep
16 grazing from federal lands.

17 18 **2. Forest Health**

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

22
23 To improve the health of our forests we urge that federal and state forests be accessible to the renewable
24 energy industry to allow harvesting of devastated wood product for use in environmentally beneficial value-
25 added products.

26
27 We support implementation and full funding of efforts to minimize the effects of the insect epidemics on the
28 National and State Forests throughout the Western United States. Federal, state and private programs must
29 be approved immediately to protect open space, wildlife habitat, watersheds, clean air and other natural
30 resources as well as infrastructure such as roads and utility lines for public safety.

31 32 **3. Wild Horse and Burro Population**

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

35
36 We urge continued study and reasonable use of lethal and non-lethal methods in addition to the use of
37 sterilization techniques to help control population.

38
39 We support slaughter of excess feral horses and burros.

40
41 We oppose the portion of the Safeguard American Food Exports Act of 2017, which denies horse meat
42 consumption. We therefore support horse meat consumption that meets the same USDA health and safety
43 standards already in place for other livestock meats such as beef, pork, or lamb.

44
45 We support the USDA-inspected horse and burro adoption program.

1 We oppose release of non-adopted animals on to public lands.

2

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

4

5 **M. Commodity Check-off Programs**

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

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

23

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

28

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

30

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

33

34 **N. Rural Utilities Service (RUS)**

35 We support the rural utility cooperatives and oppose their privatization. We encourage Congress to keep the
36 RUS Revolving Fund intact.

37

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

39

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

43

44 **O. Regulatory Agencies**

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

1
2 We recommend federal resource management agencies work together to form a single definition for
3 wetlands and/or riparian zones.

4
5 We oppose regulatory actions that infringe on private property rights and do not provide compensation for
6 affected landowners.

7
8 We urge compliance and enforcement of current anti-pollution laws.

9
10 We urge the EPA to regulate aromatics under the Clean Air Act and encourage their replacement with
11 domestically- grown, advanced biofuels.

12 13 **P. Food Security and Nutrition Programs**

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

15
16 We support continuation and full funding of the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Seniors Farmers
17 Market Nutrition Programs.

18
19 We support incentive programs such as the Double-Up Food Bucks program, that double the value of SNAP
20 purchases for local fruits and vegetables, and the use of delivery service does not exclude these programs.

21
22 We support the effort to combine the Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Programs.

23
24 We support reauthorization and full funding of federal nutrition programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition
25 Assistance Program (SNAP), Child and Adult Care Food Program, School Lunch Program, School
26 Breakfast Program, Summer Feeding Program, the Farm-to-School Program, Special Supplemental Food
27 Program for WIC, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Commodity Food
28 Supplement Program (CFSP), and Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and
29 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

30
31 We support continuation of the SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program and expansion of the
32 program to include farmer's markets and community supported agriculture (CSAs).

33
34 We support education of elderly about the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program.

35
36 We support the gleaning bills that enable farmers to donate produce to organizations for distribution to the
37 needy and the poor and to take a tax credit for such donations.

38
39 We support food education programs and local food nutrition trainings.

40
41 We support transparent supply chains and local and regional food procurement for domestic hunger relief.

42
43 We strongly oppose any disproportionate cuts to the Food and Nutrition Title that change the structure of
44 food assistance in a way that decreases benefits or change the eligibility and qualifications. We urge
45 Congress to improve food assistance programs by including more education on health, nutrition, and family
46 budgeting, controlling costs and eliminating junk food and sugar sweetened drinks from nutritional funding.

1
2 We support the allocation of national resources to alleviate “food deserts” as defined by the USDA.
3

4 **Article II. Agricultural Technology**

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

6 We support and encourage long-term research and development on small and large-scale plots and
7 advancement in production methods focused on soil health, including but not limited to cover crops and
8 reduced tillage in the various production methods.
9

10 We support and encourage research and development of non-GMO alternative crops that are less water
11 intensive and/or drought resistant, pest and disease resistant.
12

13 We support and encourage research and development of perennial crops, including cereal grains such as
14 Kernza.
15

16 We support alternatives to energy and chemical intensive methods of production.
17

18 We urge Congress and the USDA to re-commit and fully fund research into alternative crops and uses for
19 crops at all USDA ARS centers.
20

21 We support the USDA, ARS, and land grant and community colleges to increase publicly funded
22 independent research to benefit all producers.
23

24 We support the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices that enhance environmental quality, make the
25 most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources, sustain the economic viability of farm
26 operations, enhance the quality of life for farmers and society and where appropriate, integrate natural
27 biological cycles and controls to protect the resource base on which agriculture depends.
28

29 We support the use of the term “GMO” to refer only to plants and organisms which have been modified at
30 the genomic level through genetic manipulation such as splicing or recombination. This definition should
31 exclude any foods processed with or containing genetically-engineered ingredients or GMOs.
32

33 **B. New Agricultural Production Technologies Genetically Modified Organisms**

34 Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) have raised some ethical, environmental, food safety, legal,
35 market and structural issues that impact everyone in the food chain. At the same time, many of our
36 producers are incorporating GMO varieties in their farming operations. The rights of both GMO and non-
37 GMO producers should be respected as appropriate regulatory agencies continue to research and evaluate
38 these concerns, including but not limited to required consumer labeling for foods made from or containing
39 GMOs.
40

41 We acknowledge concerns that biotechnology is being used as a trade barrier, and respect all nations’ food
42 policies and thus urge open dialogue, cooperation and understanding in trade negotiations relating to GMOs.
43

44 We oppose the introduction or use of GMOs as pharmaceuticals until independent scientific research proves
45 that they are safe both ecologically and for human and animal consumption.
46

1 **C. Other Agricultural Production Techniques**

2 We urge extreme caution with the introduction of products made from cloned animals.

3
4 We oppose the prosecution of farmers who unknowingly plant proprietary organisms on their own land for
5 their own purposes.

6
7 We support legislation like the Hatch-Waxman Act of 1984, which encouraged true, generic competition in
8 off- patent drugs, and to encourage and allow the development and use of off-patent crop protection
9 chemicals.

10
11 We oppose the use of Bovine Growth Hormone (BGH) (BST).

12
13 We oppose the use of imported Milk Protein Concentrate (casein).

14
15 We oppose culturing meat in a laboratory for industrial production of food.

16
17 We recommend increasing the public funding for agricultural research.

18
19 **D. Agricultural Structures.**

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

22
23 We recognize controlled growing environments to be permanent or temporary greenhouses or hoop houses.

24
25 We support ancillary structures as an agricultural application, as opposed to commercial industrial, or residential,
26 including: animal housing, shade, storage, fencing, and cold storage.

27
28 **E. Bees and Pollinators**

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

30
31 We acknowledge the results of research indicating that multiple factors contribute to the decline in
32 pollinators including pesticides, habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and climate change.

33
34 We encourage action to support the health of bees and other pollinators.

35
36 We urge USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), give recommendations for the health
37 and protection of pollinators with enforcement and research dating back to 2009.

38
39 We urge the USDA to include “lethal” criteria and to include “chronic injury, weakness or disease” for a
40 chemical, or practice, that has harmful and devastating effects on pollinator population. We urge effective
41 and aggressive enforcement of chemical restrictions and management practices.

42
43 **F. Small Business Development Authority**

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

1 **G. Genetic Ownership**

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

4
5 We support legislation to put the liability incurred from unwanted propagation of GMO traits in the hands of
6 the patent owner, and we support indemnification for non-GMO/identity-preserved crops by patent holders.

7
8 We support legislation to prohibit the patenting of heritage seed and animal and biological genetics.

9
10 We support the right of farmers to plant seed derived from proprietary organisms on their own land.

11
12 We support establishing and maintaining foundation seed banks

13
14 We support all cultivars developed with public funds protect the rights of farmers to save seeds and the
15 rights of breeders to share and improve such germplasm and breeds.

16
17 We support all publicly-funded cultivars be immediately available for breeders.

18
19 **H. Unmanned Aerial Systems**

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

22
23 **I. Livestock Health**

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

27
28 We request that quarantine restrictions be periodically reevaluated.

29
30 We support all cattle entering the United States from foreign soil be tested for all classes of diseases and that
31 those testing positive for any disease should be handled according to established protocol regarding
32 quarantine and/or impounded at the expense of the importer.

33
34 We request APHIS provide necessary resources to control and prevent disease spread in outbreak situations
35 in consultation with affected state livestock health professionals.

36
37 We support incentives for veterinarians who agree to serve underserved areas.

38
39 We urge all federal and state agencies entrusted with wildlife management also be mandated to implement a
40 comprehensive management plan to eradicate brucellosis and chronic wasting disease from all wildlife
41 under their control.

42
43 We require full market value compensation for domestically raised game and other livestock destroyed by
44 the government on private and commercial ranches.

45
46 We support the “Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign” which states that continuous antibiotic use as a feed

1 additive should be banned.

2
3 We oppose the importation of ruminant animals, or products from any country that does not have an
4 enforceable ban on animal by-products, used in feed for ruminant animals that meets USDA standards.

5 6 **J. Animal Identification and Livestock Traceability**

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

8
9 We oppose any national animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease
10 through traceability.

11
12 We oppose any mandatory animal identification program designed to force livestock producers to register
13 their premises through 4-H, FFA, or fair programs.

14
15 We oppose any premise registration and electronic or biometric identification program that

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

21
22 We urge all states to have an acceptable form of identification for producers that move cattle inter-state
23 under the Animal Disease Traceability Program.

24 25 **K. Telecommunications**

26 We support the efforts of Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to provide rural broadband services to their
27 members.

28
29 We support enhanced 911 emergency telephone services in rural areas.

30
31 We support greater uniformity of cellular (mobile) telephone service and user rates, as well as uniformity in
32 roaming rates applied outside the local service area of the user.

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

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

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

40
41 We oppose the merger of cable television or satellite dish services but support the development of
42 cooperative cable television systems to rural sectors.

43 44 **L. Ag Data**

45 We support data collected by companies and data being used in production agriculture belongs to and
46 should be used at the discretion of those producers to whom it belongs.

1
2 **M. Right to Repair**

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

5
6 We support the development of a universal diagnostic system for agricultural equipment similar to OBD2.
7

8 **Article III. Competition and Concentration**

9 **A. Industrial Corporate Farming**

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

13
14 Farming by industrial corporate farms and by foreign owners should be prohibited.

15
16 We support the strengthening and enforcement of antitrust laws.

17
18 We oppose the vertical integration and consolidation of production and processing by industrial corporate
19 farms through mergers and acquisitions.

20
21 We oppose packer ownership of animals.

22
23 We oppose multinational grain and food conglomeration.
24

25 **B. Infrastructure Ownership**

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

29
30 **Article IV. International Relations & Trade**

31 **A. Trade Policy**

32
33 **1. Foreign Policy**

34 We support a U.S. trade policy that returns the nation to a positive trade balance.

35
36 We support holding those who import/export prohibited animal products accountable, revoking their
37 import/export license, prosecuting them to the full extent of the law, and holding them financially
38 accountable for the market losses of producers.

39
40 We support legislation that would prohibit the export of pesticides not registered for food and fiber uses in
41 the U.S. for food and fiber uses in other countries.

42
43 We strongly request the USDA work to expand foreign markets for any domestically produced farm and
44 ranch commodities.

45
46 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 those endangered by natural disasters and famine, to assure their survival and well-being.
- Food should be distributed once it reaches the intended destination. There should be no tolerance for donations using poverty-stricken nations as a dumping ground for unsafe commodities.

We support adequate funding of the international school lunch program as part of the Global Food for Education Initiative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Long-term Trade Agreements

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

- Establish trade agreements that address the 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 competition 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 other countries through the establishment of a fair-trade agreement that requires other countries 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 cannot be documented, Congress is encouraged to take corrective actions, including repealing trade agreements.

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

We oppose the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS).

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

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

B. International Relations

1. United Nations

We urge the United States government 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 World Farmers Organization, and Non-Governmental Organizations, committed to agricultural justice for all people of this nation and the world.

3. World Food

We recommend that America continue its leadership role in providing food reserves to help in times of

1 famine and natural disaster with the cost being shared by all developed countries.

2
3 We support programs that distribute and assure delivery of food to the needy.

4 5 **4. Basic Climatological Observations**

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

8 9 **5. Paris Accords**

10 We support the goals articulated through the Paris Climate Accords.

11 12 **Article V. Credit**

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

14 We support a strong cooperatively-owned Farm Credit system.

15
16 We oppose the purchase of any FCS bank or portion of the banking system by any non-FCS entity.

17
18 We oppose allowing FCS banks to sever mineral rights on property foreclosed upon and subsequently sold.

19 20 **Article VI. Cooperatives**

21 **A. Cooperatives**

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

24
25 We affirm our belief in the basic Rochdale Cooperative principles, the one person, one vote principle, and
26 urge Farmers Union members and organizations to provide leadership in patronage, philosophy, and
27 operation of cooperatives. It is the individual responsibility of each Farmers Union member to be a full
28 participant and patron in the cooperative movement and to build a closer relationship between the farm
29 organization and cooperatives.

30
31 We support concerted efforts should be made to form specialized cooperatives that allow farmers to sell
32 locally grown products and locally made value-added products directly to consumers.

33
34 We support strengthening agricultural cooperatives in the American farming system to enable farmers to
35 achieve greater bargaining power, both in marketing and purchasing.

36
37 We support consumer food cooperatives that can provide better services through cooperative purchasing by
38 their members.

39
40 We support cooperatively held land.

41
42 We recommend cooperative board members, managers, and employees attend training in the philosophy of
43 cooperatives.

44
45 We urge cooperatives to set aside a portion of their net proceeds for educational programs.

1
2 We support the Capper-Volstead Act, passed in 1922, that allows agricultural producers to join
3 cooperatively to market, package, transport, and buy their products.

4
5 When developing a new cooperative, we encourage at least one non-agricultural member and one person
6 with a business background, to serve on the board of directors.

7
8 We urge caution when considering joint ventures between cooperatives and corporations or other entities
9 not protected under the Capper-Volstead Act.

10
11 We oppose the double taxation of a co-op on both total earnings and the producer's share of these returns as
12 personal income.

13
14 We strongly encourage all Farmers Union members to verify that businesses calling themselves co-ops are
15 in fact bona fide cooperatives operating under state regulations.

16
17 We oppose any federal legislation that would make all cooperative financial paper, including patronage
18 dividends, subject to the rules, regulations, and jurisdiction of the Federal Securities and Exchange
19 Commission.

20
21 We urge that cooperative members consider the long-term consequences of selling their cooperatives for
22 short-term goals and urge the board oppose the sale of any cooperative ventures to agribusiness.

23 24 **Article VII. Water, Land, and Conservation**

25 **A. Agricultural Land**

26 27 **1. Ownership**

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

29
30 We strongly oppose the sale of American farms, real estate, and food processing operations to foreign
31 governments, investors, corporations, or any other foreign entity, especially in circumstances where the
32 merger, sale, or acquisition consolidates markets.

33
34 We strongly urge the Department of Justice to block any merger, sale, or acquisition that will undermine
35 U.S. food security, safety, and family farming interests.

36
37 We urge tax advantages now available to foreign and industrial corporate investors be eliminated
38 immediately to discourage foreign and industrial corporate ownership of agricultural land.

39
40 We demand lands owned by foreign investors have all income taxes computed on an accrual basis so that
41 agricultural products cannot be exported out of the United States without any income tax payment as is now
42 possible on a cash basis. All foreign ownership of land shall be reported to each Secretary of State. Failure
43 to report shall have substantial penalties. Compliance will insure payment of taxes by foreign owners.

44
45 We oppose foreign citizens leasing state land or holding federal grazing allotments. Those foreign citizens
46 holding current leases should be required to relinquish them.

1
2 We urge foreign owners of American lands be required to comply with an approved soil conservation plan.
3

4 **2. Agricultural Land Preservation Programs**

5 We support the use of transferable development rights, conservation easements, and other tools that will
6 keep agricultural lands in production while also providing open space.
7

8 We support increased permanent funding for the purchase of farm and ranch properties at both the federal
9 and state levels that ensures long-term affordability of farmland for future generations of farmers and
10 ranchers.
11

12 We support the advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs, which provide
13 opportunities for for-profit, non-profit, and cooperative agricultural entities and strive to support educational
14 farms that teach agricultural and business skills.
15

16 When land is purchased for open space with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for agricultural
17 purposes with development restrictions, the resale must be handled by offering that land publicly for
18 purchase at that time.
19

20 We demand all entities honor the terms of all conservation easements.
21

22 We urge the preservation of urban and regional farmland and water using intergovernmental, public and
23 private partnerships that fund methods and structures for cooperation and collaboration.
24

25 We support tax credits generated through the creation of a conservation easement, be marketable to those
26 who have a tax liability with appropriate safeguards.
27

28 **3. Eminent Domain**

29 We support the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which assures that “private property
30 (shall not) be taken for public use, without just compensation.” Public use shall not be construed to mean
31 private entities using eminent domain for private property.
32

33 We strongly oppose the use of eminent domain by government agencies on behalf of any private entity that
34 does not itself have eminent domain powers.
35

36 We urge entities that have the right of eminent domain be required to prove that the land is needed to serve
37 the public interest, that fair environmental standards will be observed, and that no more land is taken than is
38 required.
39

40 Any access to properties being considered for projects shall only be by written notice with adequate time
41 frames included to adjust scheduling of entry for surveying and siting.
42

43 All reclamation work will include input from the landowner and shall occur in a timely manner with
44 bonding in place until mutually agreed project success.
45

46 We support having a public hearing on any proposed use of eminent domain in the affected area, after legal

1 notification of all area residents and landowners.

2

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

5

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

9

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

12

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

15

16 **B. Public Lands**

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

19

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

22

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

26

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

29

30 We support revitalization of unused municipal land as farmland.

31

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

33

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

36

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

40

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

43

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

45

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

1
2 **C. Domestic Horse Population**

3 We urge Congress and the USDA to immediately reinstate and fund federal inspection for harvest and
4 processing of equine species.
5

6 We oppose the portion of Safeguard American Food Exports Act of 2017, which denies horse meat
7 consumption. We therefore support horse meat consumption that meets the same health and safety standards
8 already in place for other livestock meats such as beef, pork, and lamb.
9

10 We urge legislation that will provide for better disposition of feral or domestic horses and burros,
11 specifically the sale of the animals with immediate ownership at local auction markets.
12

13 We urge that transportation regulations be revisited to allow transportation of horses at the discretion of the
14 owner in the most cost-effective manner and for their intended purposes.
15

16 **D. Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

17 We support an Endangered Species Act that is amended to take input from affected landowners, tribal and
18 elected officials from a large geographic area before getting a designation under the ESA.
19

20 We support legislative delisting of the grizzly bear and all wolf species by Fish and Wildlife Service under
21 the Endangered Species Act.
22

23 We urge the US Fish and Wildlife Service require the use of the best available scientific data on population
24 trends, available habitat and genetic background in determination of listing and possible protection of any
25 candidate species.
26

27 We urge federal funds be made available to state or federal agencies to manage endangered species and just
28 compensation for producers with ESA habitat and/or for losses incurred.
29

30 The delisting process should automatically be triggered when species targets identified in the listing
31 document are reached.
32

33 We oppose the application of the Endangered Species Act critical habitat designation to habitat that is not
34 occupied by any listed species.
35

36 We oppose the reintroduction of predatory animals in areas where they may have an adverse effect on
37 agricultural operations.
38

39 We support keeping prairie dogs off the endangered species list.
40

41 Given that public and private efforts designed to increase the population of candidate species has proven
42 successful, federal agencies should be required to work with landowners to continue this effort.
43

44 We strongly oppose efforts to list the Greater Sage Grouse and Lesser Prairie Chicken as endangered or
45 threatened under the ESA.
46

1 We support Candidate Conservation Agreements with assurances as a tool to lessen impacts to agricultural
2 producers from candidate species that are warranted but precluded or listed.
3

4 **E. Conservation**

5 We encourage responsible stewardship of land, water, and energy resources, and appropriate conservation
6 practices that includes state and federal reclamation standards with enforcement and bonding requirements
7 for public and private projects, including mining, logging, fossil fuels exploration, and right-of-way or
8 easement operations, with bonds in place until reclamation is complete and successful.
9

10 We support full funding and fund disbursement of the abandoned mines reclamation program.
11

12 We support local participation and control in the permitting process for conservation and construction
13 projects.
14

15 We recommend an increased emphasis on reclamation and re-establishment of healthy and functioning
16 riparian zones and other habitats impacted by mining, oil and gas development, and overuse.
17

18 We urge the reuse of all products possible.
19

20 We insist that all open and unused water wells, inactive or abandoned mines, seismograph holes, wells used
21 to produce oil and gas, be covered or filled to prevent underground pollution and to eliminate danger to
22 people, animals, and agricultural operations.
23

24 We support preventing contamination in surface and groundwater including shallow and porous aquifers
25 under the protection of the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts. Also, we support efforts to
26 remediate contamination where it exists.
27

28 **F. Pests and Noxious Weeds**

29 We urge rigid enforcement of laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all lands. We recommend
30 increased funding of cost-share programs to control noxious weeds and pests.
31

32 We support alternatives to chemical control measures be used as a means of noxious weed control on public
33 lands.
34

35 We support a re-classification of noxious weeds so that it considers the beneficial use of such plants to
36 pollinators.
37

38 We support local education programs designed for the identification and management of noxious weeds and
39 pests.
40

41 We support Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as the primary regulatory act for
42 applications of pesticides by farmers and ranchers. Any additional permitting required by EPA under court
43 mandate should mirror existing record keeping, education and training requirements.
44

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

1
2 We support integrated pest management (IPM) and continued research on biological controls to address
3 pests and noxious weeds.

4
5 We request that the EPA improve the permitting process enabling effective use of poisons, biologicals and
6 other control tools for predators and pests.

7
8 We support penalties on willfully negligent occurrences of chemical and biological trespass.
9

10 **G. Water**

11 We support investments to increase storage and improvements to distribution systems of water. We support
12 the conservation and efficient use of water.

13
14 We support state primacy in agricultural and individual water rights within their jurisdiction.

15
16 We oppose the use of federal environmental law or water law as a method for re-allocation or restriction of
17 water rights acquired pursuant to state law.

18
19 We support legislation to prevent the change of use or removal of water from the basin of origin or non-
20 tributary groundwater without a complete impact statement concerning the effect on agriculture,
21 environment and economic stability. The basin of origin must be compensated for any water removed.

22
23 We strongly urge federal agencies, such as the EPA and USDA, when altering the “Historic Use” of water
24 point/system, apply a “consensus model” by seeking input from local stakeholders including private land
25 owners, producers, and local communities to find solutions that are inclusive, comprehensive, and
26 resourceful.

27
28 We strenuously oppose any efforts by the federal government through the usage or expansion of a national
29 water policy and the Endangered Species Act to usurp the rights and prerogatives of individual states,
30 irrigation districts and power generation facilities.

31
32 Water rights should not be created with wilderness and National Park designation except those adjudicated
33 by state law.

34
35 Farmers should not assume higher costs for irrigation water due to increasing demands placed on water
36 resources, in- stream flow for recreation or habitat enhancement for EPA listings.

37 38 **H. Native American Water Rights**

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

41
42 We urge that any irrigation project developed on tribal land be used by Native American family farmers and
43 not operated as a non-tribal corporation, farm or business.

44 45 **I. Water Quality**

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

1 uses.

2

3 We support enforcement of the Clean Water Act.

4

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

8

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

11

12 We support the enhancing and maintaining of water quality in rivers and streams to protect our
13 environment. We encourage pro-active efforts to implement watershed restoration to maintain or improve
14 water quality.

15

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

18

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

21

22 We oppose the use of potable water in oil/mineral extraction and processing. We strongly oppose *in situ*
23 leach mining.

24

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

27

28 **J. Federal Water Projects**

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

31

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

33

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

35

36 **K. Soil Health**

37 We encourage and support soil health practices that aim to increase organic matter.

38

39 We support soil health practices that reduce dependence on commercial chemicals and fertilizers.

40

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

44

45 **L. Greenhouse Gas Mitigation**

46 We support continued research and development of carbon sequestration technologies including but not

1 limited to involving agriculture in carbon capture and storage.

2
3 We support agricultural producers having the opportunity to benefit from carbon capture and storage
4 through the trading of credits.

5
6 We support the trading of carbon credits and the potential for inclusion of carbon sequestration and methane
7 capture as agricultural conservation practices.

8
9 We support research into terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including
10 grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, no-till, bio-char, and other
11 proven conservation methods.

12
13 We support the use of the USDA or their entities to manage the inspection/verification of carbon credits on
14 agricultural lands, as opposed to the EPA.

15
16 We demand verification and regulation by the USDA, not the EPA, of any agriculture regulation related to
17 climate change legislation.

18
19 We support state and national greenhouse gas reduction targets that use a voluntary incentive-based
20 approach to continue the economic viability of farms and ranches.

21
22 We recognize that a carbon fee may be an important component of addressing emissions mitigation strategy
23 and so long as agricultural producers not be adversely affected.

- 24
25 ➤ We urge the development of strategies and incentives at the local, state and federal level to:Improve
26 our nation’s crop and rangeland resiliency as well as its long-term sustainability and productivity.
27 ➤ Promote increased water storage and management solutions that help producers adapt to changing
28 conditions and decrease production losses due to lack or excess of water availability.
29

30 **M. Waste Disposal**

31 **1. Toxic Waste**

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

33
34 We support the detoxification or neutralization of hazardous waste as opposed to concentrating the waste in
35 another locality. No purchase, construction, or use of proposed toxic waste sites shall be allowed before
36 approval by county and state health officials, EPA and county commissioners in the county where disposal
37 is to take place.
38

39 **2. Non-Toxic Waste**

40 We support efforts in the legislature to require industry be accountable for the wastes they generate.
41

42 **3. Recycling**

43 We favor recycling of all products, including oil and other lubricants.
44
45
46

1
2 We encourage development of recycling and composting.

3
4 We encourage the creation of incentives to increase the use of recyclable materials.

5
6 We support reduction of food waste according to the EPA food recovery hierarchy.
7

8 **4. Pollution Prevention** 9

10 We support policies that create incentives to avoid production of waste rather than policies to remediate the
11 production of waste.
12

13 **Article VIII. Energy**

14 **A. Power Utilities**

15 We oppose electric deregulation at the federal and state level. We oppose any sale of Power Marketing
16 Authorities.
17

18 We support the allocation of Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) power for cooperatives.
19

20 We support electrical storage as an integral part of the electrical system.
21

22 We encourage the further build-out of transmission infrastructure, including up-grades of existing
23 distribution lines to support distributed energy generation for renewable energy.
24

25 We are opposed to any surcharge on hydroelectric rates.
26

27 We oppose changing historic use of stored water in relation to power generation.
28

29 We urge development of hydroelectric power-generated energy with appropriate safeguards for the
30 environment, fish and wildlife, agricultural land and water rights.
31

32 We recommend the modernization and updating of existing hydroelectric plants to provide maximum
33 electrical energy, especially in the western states, with any increase of energy allocated to preference power
34 users. Further, we urge the development of secondary hydro generation structures at existing dam sites to at
35 least double current energy production.
36

37 We support net metering. We support uniform interconnectivity standards that allow for farm and ranch
38 operations to fully utilize existing system capacity.
39

40 **B. Energy** 41

42 **1. Research and Development**

43 We recommend the development and implementation of a comprehensive national energy policy which aids
44 in the United States' energy independence, fair and equitable distribution, and includes a focus on
45 conservation.
46

1 We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources. We
2 urge individuals and companies to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient.

3
4 We support public utilities and rural electrics exploring other energy sources for generation.

5
6 We oppose efforts to initiate commercial leasing of federal shale resources before effectiveness of and
7 impacts from research, development and demonstration technologies are known.

8 9 **2. Alternative and Renewable Energy**

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

12
13 We support the development of renewable sources of energy as our top priority in reducing dependence on
14 fossil fuels.

15
16 We urge Congress to direct the appropriate federal agencies to conduct a study of the national rural electric
17 grid to determine its existing capacity to develop a domestic, distributed generation network.

18
19 We support federal energy incentives for all forms of alternative and renewable energy that encourage
20 community, farm, and ranch-owned production, including the Production Tax Credit, Rural Energy for
21 America Program, and Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

22
23 We support farmer and rancher ownership and involvement in alternative energies.

24
25 We support the establishment of a wide variety of renewable energy sources that include but are not limited
26 to wind, solar, bio-mass, hydro, hydrogen fuel cells, algae, geothermal and any other available source. It is
27 important to encourage the land grant and community colleges to focus their research on those cropping
28 systems that provide renewable energy. Federal and state funds should be targeted to encourage diversified
29 community-based energy systems that create jobs and new wealth in rural areas of the country.

30
31 We support and endorse 25X25 as a national campaign; this initiative urges that programs and incentives be
32 established at the state and national levels to enable the United States to produce 25 percent of its own
33 energy from renewable sources by 2025.

34
35 We support a nationwide renewable energy standard of 25x25 and renewable fuels standard of 36b gallons
36 of renewable fuels to be blended into gasoline by 2022.

37
38 We support renewable energy developmental rights remain with surface owners, including the use of air
39 space.

40
41 We support maximum opportunities for wind development through cooperative wind associations.

42
43 We support a tradable federal production tax credit for locally-owned projects.

44
45 We urge all states to require bonding for removal and reclamation for all renewable energy projects. We
46 strongly support increased federal investment in transmission capacity, including merchant lines.

1
2 We urge siting of new transmission lines take advantage of existing corridors wherever possible.

3
4 We also urge siting on public lands vs. private lands. If sited on private lands, landowners should be
5 compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement, including the option of annual payments.
6

7 We support the research and development in the advanced cellulosic biofuels.
8

9 **3. Distributed Energy Generation**

10 We support distributed energy generation in rural areas because it can provide additional income to farmers
11 and ranchers who place energy generation systems (i.e., small hydroelectric, anaerobic digesters, wind
12 generators, photovoltaic arrays, etc.) on their land, circulating local development dollars through the local
13 economy and benefiting rural communities.
14

15 **4. Federal Transmission Planning**

16 We strongly support the continued build out of the federal transmission system. Current proposals call for
17 the federal government to promote and administer large transmission projects. When siting transmission
18 corridors we urge consideration of the needs of landowners.
19

20 We support a comprehensive strategy to increase security of the national electric grids to prevent rolling
21 blackouts and to protect utility infrastructure.
22

23 **5. Nuclear**

24 We support the use of nuclear power with extreme caution, using safe and proper methods of waste disposal
25 and transportation.
26

27 We support research into thorium, cold fusion technology, and other fuels to replace uranium in nuclear
28 plants.
29

30 **6. Petroleum/Domestic Energy Production**

31 We oppose EPA's classification of crankcase oil and other lubricants as hazardous waste.
32

33 We support Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards as it has wide-ranging benefits resulting
34 from less fuel consumption.
35

36 We support setback restrictions from occupied dwellings including schools and hospitals for drilling site
37 location and tank battery placement. Such setback restrictions should be in full compliance with federal
38 NEPA standards and take into consideration potential impact on nationally-designated archeological sites.
39

40 We urge landowner input be sought in locating tank batteries and other production structures.
41

42 We support full public disclosure of chemicals used in drilling, fracturing and production practices.
43

44 We urge stringent casing standards be established and enforced to insure bore hole containment integrity.
45

46 We urge comprehensive baseline and subsequent water testing be completed to insure our water quality is

1 protected. In addition, we support ongoing monitoring with tracers to track the movement of chemicals used
2 in all phases of petroleum production.

3
4 We support all produced water either be purified or re-injected to its parent formation.
5

6 **C. Alternative Fuels**

7 We support programs that assist family farms, ranches, and cooperatives in obtaining grants and financial
8 aid to develop bio-fuel plants.
9

10 We support Congress to enact a permanent extension of the Production Tax Credit that will be only
11 available to domestic producers.
12

13 We support long term federal financial support of ethanol infrastructure including development of “flex
14 fuel” vehicles that run on greater ethanol blends, pipelines to transport ethanol, and the “blender pumps” at
15 fueling stations to accommodate the fuel.
16

17 We encourage the utilization of oxygenated fuel, such as ethanol, to achieve improved air quality and reduce
18 dependence on foreign energy imports.
19

20 We support the continued availability of non-oxygenated fuels for all engines with older technologies.
21

22 We support increasing the blend of domestically produced ethanol in all gasoline sold in the United States.
23

24 We encourage the use of biodiesel to decrease our dependency on foreign fuel.
25

26 We oppose any weakening of federal renewable fuel standards through the granting of waivers to refineries.
27

28 We support the federal bio-fuels standard.
29

30 We support the development of infrastructure to permit use of natural gas as an economical transportation
31 fuel.
32

33 **Article IX. Economic and Social**

34 We urge Congress and the US Department of Justice to investigate corporate consolidation, the elimination
35 of fair markets, which create uneven economic playing fields for small, minority and independent family
36 producers.
37

38 **A. Economic Development**

39 We support economic development that preserves and expands present agricultural economic base and
40 focuses on value-added opportunities for agricultural crops, livestock and renewable energy.
41

42 **B. Farm to Consumer Food Systems**

43 We support Farm-to-School (cafeteria, college, institution), Share U.S.A., and similar programs which
44 encourage consumers and publicly funded institutions to purchase food directly from domestic agricultural
45 producers.
46

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

3
4 We support CSA/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer co-ops to sell direct to restaurants, grocers, and
5 festivals.

6
7 We support opportunities for farmers and ranchers to sell their products locally through farmer’s markets,
8 on-line markets and other local marketing initiatives.

9
10 We encourage the development and support of the “Food Hub” model for sourcing and distributing local
11 foods to wholesale and consumer markets.

12 13 **C. Animal Welfare**

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

16
17 We support humane treatment of all domesticated animals, and their access to proper food, shelter and
18 water.

19
20 We oppose the adoption of laws that criminalize whistleblowing, documentation, and reporting of animal
21 welfare violations.

22
23 We support prosecution of individuals who falsely document, falsely report, or manipulate evidence of
24 animal mistreatment. These individuals should be made to provide for a remedy at equity or at law incurred
25 by the victims of such false documentation.

26
27 We encourage producers throughout our region to follow accepted industry standards on animal welfare
28 based upon expert input and consideration.

29
30 We urge owners of all types of livestock properly dispose of their animals and not release them on private or
31 public lands.

32
33 We support the development of egg sexing technologies to eliminate the euthanasia of male chicks raised in
34 egg-laying operations.

35
36 We oppose the euthanasia of chicks because of their sex.

37 38 **D. Tax Reform**

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

42
43 We urge Congress to close loopholes that allow corporations or individuals to evade their fair share of taxes.

44
45 We urge Congress to continue the task of tax revision. Changes should include the following:

- 46 ➤ Provide federal income tax credits or refunds if no tax liability exists for the payment of state and

1 local property taxes.

- 2 ➤ Reform of the capital gains tax to include an exemption on the sale of farm real estate comparable
- 3 to the exemption provided on the sale of a residence.
- 4 ➤ Reduction or elimination of the capital gains tax for a seller when land and machinery is sold to a
- 5 beginning farmer at a reduced rate or the seller finances the purchase at a discounted interest rate.
- 6 ➤ Allow a one-time per person rollover of the capital gains from the sale of a farm or small business
- 7 into an approved retirement plan.
- 8 ➤ Federal tax credits be given to landowners who implement riparian improvements on their property
- 9 under approved federal agency guidelines, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service
- 10 (NRCS).
- 11 ➤ Any tax policy change should continue allowing the cost of health insurance coverage for self-
- 12 employed people to be fully deductible for income tax purposes on Schedule C or Schedule F.
- 13

14 **E. Estate Tax**

15 We support a permanent exemption system for estate taxes which allows family-owned farms, ranches, and

16 rural, agriculturally related businesses to continue to exist.

17

18 We oppose shifting tax liability from the estate tax to the capital gains tax through the elimination of the

19 “step-up” provision within the capital gains tax policy.

20

21 **F. Internet Sales Tax**

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

23 address of the purchaser.

24

25 **G. Commodity Futures Markets**

26 We support producer education in the use of commodity futures markets. Any illegal activities by

27 commodity futures traders and speculators should be dealt with by the full enforcement of the law.

28

29 We support a new research revenue stream with an assessment of \$1 per agricultural commodity futures

30 contract traded on an exchange. Such assessments would be deposited in the state checkoff fund for the

31 respective commodity, be used exclusively for research for that commodity, and not displace existing

32 checkoff funding sources.

33

34 We urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to modify the authority granted the exchanges to

35 expand commodity price variations. We urge the Commission to direct exchanges to return the variation

36 allowances to the year 2000 spread which will bring more stability to the daily market of commodities and

37 provide a partial safety net to producers.

38

39 We urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission direct exchanges to expand the number of delivery

40 points within their region for actual delivery options for farmers and elevators buying from farmers.

41

42 **H. Warehousing**

43 We urge Congress to take all necessary legislative action to ensure that stored commodities shall remain the

44 property of those persons who delivered them for storage.

45

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

1
2 We support the right of individual states to regulate the grain merchandising activities of warehouses
3 licensed by the federal government under the Grain Standards and Warehouse Improvement Act 2000
4 (USWA).
5

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

7 We urge the Secretary of Agriculture and the Department of Justice act to prevent oligopolies and
8 monopolies and remedy the concentration of power in the packing, marketing, processing, and crop and
9 livestock input industries.

10
11 We affirm the right of USDA to create, implement and fund GIPSA rules and regulations. We demand the
12 authorities prohibit large corporate meat packers from operating feedlots and/or owning and having captive
13 supply livestock.
14

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

18 We support reinstating mandatory price reporting laws.
19

20 **J. Anti-Trust Enforcement**

21 We support enforcement of the existing anti-trust laws to break up corporate concentration in our food
22 production, marketing, and crop and livestock input systems.
23

24 We urge anti-trust legislation be enforced to control monopolistic concentration in energy production and
25 distribution, and investigation of large corporate interests that control our current energy sources.
26

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

28 We oppose legislation and regulations that fail to consider the differences between small family or
29 community operations and multi-national corporations.
30

31 Legislation and regulations should reflect differences in scale and the fundamental difference between real
32 persons and corporations.
33

34 **L. Federal Reserve**

35 Appointments to the Federal Reserve Board should be limited to a term of five years, and one-half of the
36 appointees should represent segments of the economy other than banking, including one bona fide family
37 farmer.
38

39 We support an annual audit of the Federal Reserve System.
40

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

42 We support reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 to regulate the financial services industry. We
43 support monitoring and regulation of the derivatives market.
44

45 We support reestablishment of small transaction fees to reduce the abuses of flash trading.
46

1 **N. Alternative Crops**

2 We support the removal of hemp from the federal Controlled Substances Act.

3
4 We support the end of restrictions surrounding the transportation and importation of hemp seeds and live
5 hemp plants across state and federal boundaries.

6
7 We support assistance to family farms, ranches, and cooperatives in obtaining grants and financial aid to
8 develop bio- fuel crops.

9
10 We support research and development of less-water-intensive crops, perennial grasses and grains, pest-
11 resistant, drought-resistant, etc.

12
13 We urge land grant universities to maintain agricultural extension and research programs which focus on
14 alternative crop production for renewable energy and other uses for those crops.

15
16 We support allowing banks to provide services to licensed cannabis-related businesses without penalty.

17
18 We support the recognition of hemp and marijuana as alternative agricultural crops.

19
20 We encourage Cannabis entrepreneurs, scientists, and cultivators to pursue ventures in hemp in order to
21 utilize and further realize the nutritional, medicinal, and industrial potentials of the Cannabis plant.

22
23 We urge the U.S. Congress declassify marijuana as a Schedule 1 Drug.

24
25 **O. Education**

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

28
29 Congress must fund the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) while providing more flexibility to
30 state and local education agencies in implementation of the new act.

31
32 We urge Congress to fully fund the federal mandated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to assist
33 all districts (especially rural districts) in meeting the needs of all students.

34
35 We support agricultural education, personal resource development, career technical training programs, and
36 other occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our public educational system that should be
37 available to all who will enter the work force from the public schools.

38
39 We recommend that more education about cooperatives be introduced into the total educational system.

40
41 We support programs teaching consumers about the marketing disparity in agricultural products between the
42 producer and consumer.

43
44 We support educational programs and educational materials and curricula that promote American family
45 agriculture's commitment to food quality and safety, agricultural literacy, ethical farm practices, a safe and
46 healthful environment, land, water, and energy resource stewardship, sustainability of food supplies, and the

1 value of recycling.

2
3 We support the development and expansion of school garden programs.

4
5 We support incentives to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, especially in rural areas.

6
7 Financial aid should not be dependent on the value of the farm but on the family's annual net income.

8
9 We support the expansion of federal loan forgiveness programs to include agricultural producers and hard to
10 fill occupations in underserved rural areas.

11
12 We support a progressive student loan repayment system based on annual income once a minimum annual
13 income is surpassed.

14
15 We support funding (maintaining of Perkins funds) for career and technical education at the secondary and
16 post- secondary level and drivers' education programs.

17
18 We support the final passage of the Career and Technical Education Act.

19
20 We support the extension of broadband capacity for high speed internet to all school's equivalent to the
21 services available in urban areas.

22 23 **P. Land Grant Universities**

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

25
26 We urge the federal government restore historic levels of funding for land grant universities.

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

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

- 32 ➤ Utilize the experience of people involved in innovative production agriculture;
 - 33 ➤ Support the agricultural practices of traditional people;
 - 34 ➤ Facilitate adding value to farm products in locally-owned cooperatives and businesses, and
35 empowers low and moderate-income families to improve their economic conditions;
 - 36 ➤ Develop training and outreach to assist small-acreage owners in understanding and implementing
37 proper resource management practices;
 - 38 ➤ Focus research on crops suitable for efficient renewable energy production.
 - 39 ➤ Focus research on crops suitable for small diversified agricultural operations.
- 40

41 **Q. Medical Care**

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

44
45 We support the right of every American to have access to quality, affordable end-of-life care.

1 We support lowering health costs through disease prevention, wellness promotion, nutrition, and alternative
2 healthcare practices.
3
4 We support federal appropriations for medical research, public health services, and scholarships for training
5 all health professionals.
6
7 We support federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid. We support the expansion of Medicare to age 55.
8
9 We oppose any reduction in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement to providers, particularly those serving
10 rural communities.
11
12 We support basic acute inpatient services and outpatient primary care in rural communities, and Rural
13 hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) who provide services as a healthcare hub for rural areas.
14
15 We support payment reform efforts and continued cost-based reimbursement for rural hospitals and CAHs
16 for Medicare services.
17
18 We support recalculation of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement formulas to ensure medical coverage to
19 all citizens.
20
21 We support federal funding for rural health clinics.
22
23 We oppose federal and state regulations that hinder emergency medical technicians and fire department
24 services. We urge priority be given to building assisted-living facilities in rural communities.
25
26 We are opposed to unnecessary hospital construction or expansion and duplication of sophisticated hospital
27 equipment.
28
29 We urge expanded use of physician assistants or nurse practitioners in areas that cannot support a medical
30 doctor.
31
32 We oppose removal of mandated health benefits.
33
34 We support cost containment of pharmaceuticals and healthcare services.
35
36 We support incentives for medical professionals who agree to serve medically underserved areas.
37
38 We urge local medical facilities and hospitals to provide medical care for the indigent and working poor
39 who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid or do not have their own health insurance.
40
41 We urge the Medicare program to include the treatment of long-term illness as a covered benefit.
42
43 We support changing the Medicare Part A hospice benefits so that it is dependent upon physician
44 certification rather than a specified time limit.
45
46 We urge the federal government allow the purchase of prescription drugs from the least expensive source.

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

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

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

5 We support insurance companies providing coverage for preventative care.

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

8 We support the reinstatement of promised funding to implement the state health co-ops.

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

10 **R. Social Security**

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

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

14 We encourage implementation of a method of cost of living calculations that specifically addresses the
15 needs of Social Security beneficiaries.

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

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

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

23 **S. Social Services**

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

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

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

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

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T. Veterans’ Benefits

We support full implementation and funding of veterans’ benefits.

We support medical research and localized care for our veterans.

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

U. Congressional and Presidential Elections

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We support the elimination of “527” organizations.

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

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

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

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

We support the designation of General Election Day as a National Holiday to increase access to voting for all citizens.

V. Equality and Equity under Law

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

1 We support equality and equity under law of all citizens regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation,
2 gender identification, ability and religion.

3
4 We oppose the mass deportation of any peoples from the United States regardless of their documentation
5 status.

6
7 We support removal of Columbus Day as a national holiday.

8
9 We support the creation of a new federal holiday titled Indigenous Peoples of the Americas Day.

10 11 **Article X. Rural Development**

12 Sustainability of rural America depends upon an enhanced quality of life for rural people who can build
13 competitive businesses and cooperatives.

14
15 We support multi-year funding for the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service at levels that
16 will sustain and expand programs for revolving loans, grants and loan guarantees.

17
18 We support increased and appropriated funding for cooperative development activities, flexibility in cost
19 sharing, and training and technical assistance for all cooperatives.

20
21 We oppose any reduction of funding for rural development programs and support full funding of existing
22 programs.

23 24 **A. Transportation**

25 26 **1. Railroads**

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

29
30 We urge Congress to:

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

35
36 We urge the Surface Transportation Board, Federal Railroad Administration, railroads, elevators and grain
37 terminals to work together to provide hopper cars in sufficient quantities in a timely manner to alleviate
38 harvest delays.

39
40 We urge railroads to ship grains in some timely manner so agricultural producers are not penalized.

41
42 We oppose additional mergers and abandonment of service, and demand breakup of existing railroad
43 monopolies.

44
45 We urge the expansion of the national passenger railway service.

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

2
3 We urge the addition of warning lights and dropping arms at all major railroad crossings.

4
5 We urge continued research on railroad crossing technology and safety.

6
7 We recommend that railroads be required to maintain safe tracks and auto crossings.

8
9 We urge railroads to abide by Federal Railroad Administration guidelines not to impede grade crossings.

10 11 **2. Highways**

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

14
15 We support the completion of the “Port to Plains” highway system.

16
17 We insist that all foreign trucks on U.S. highways meet the same standards as U.S. carriers.

18
19 We recommend a nationwide standardization of the axle weights and lengths on all interstate highways

20
21 We support increasing GVW weights to 97,000 lbs. for agricultural product carriers with 6 axles.

22
23 We urge the Federal Highway Administration consider standardizing the maximum width, length and
24 weight for Longer Combination Vehicles (LCV) to help equalize state to state commerce. This should
25 include input from agricultural representation from each state.

26
27 We support requiring mud flaps on vehicles over 6,000 pounds of unloaded weight.

28
29 We oppose the proposed construction of the North American Free Trade Agreement Superhighway system.

30
31 We oppose the implementation of e-log in the commercial transportation of any agricultural products.

32 33 **B. Postal Service and Rates**

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

36
37 We recommend that the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) seek out consumer advice in initiating any changes in
38 postal service.

39
40 We urge Congress to repeal the requirement that the USPS pre-fund 75 years of projected USPS pension
41 program costs in 10 years.

42
43 We oppose political manipulation of the USPS and call on Congress to restore all funds contributed by the
44 USPS to pre-fund the pension program used by the government to offset debt and to authorize the USPS to
45 use those funds for operational costs.

1 We oppose the closure of any rural Post Office. The lack of high-speed internet and broadband requires
2 rural residents and businesses to rely on the USPS for transacting their business. Closures or consolidation
3 of rural Post Offices must include provisions for patrons to receive their mail by rural free delivery.
4

5 We oppose any increase in postal rates more than inflation for all classes of mail.
6

7 We urge Congress to block any efforts to privatize the U.S. Postal Service.
8

9 We support the reestablishment of the Postal Service Bank, and support expanding and creating of new
10 services offered by the USPS to facilitate economic growth and development in rural and inner-city
11 communities.
12

COLORADO STATE POLICY

Article I. Government Programs

A. Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA)

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

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

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

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

We urge the CDA to implement and fund a state meat and poultry inspection and grading system which would enable Colorado meat and poultry producers to market their products without the required USDA inspection certifications. Until then, we urge the expansion of the number of mobile slaughter processing units to increase access of USDA certified processing in rural areas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prior to the state of Colorado allowing the planting and or production of genetically-engineered 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,” as well as “ag commercial” and

1 “ag processing.” We further encourage the CDA to support access to farmers markets and direct producer
2 marketing efforts within the state of Colorado.

3
4 We urge CDA enforce the Bee Caution Label.

5
6 We endorse the work of the Palisade Insectary.

7
8 We recommend that the CDA continue to monitor and enforce the Farm Products and Commodity Handler
9 Act.

10
11 We support the Colorado Agriculture Workforce Development Program within the CDA to provide
12 financial assistance to hire interns to enhance our agricultural workforce and provide opportunities for
13 training the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

14
15 We support the establishment of a Young or Beginning Farmer Advisory Board that will serve to identify
16 and address issues relating to young or beginning farmers in the state and make policy recommendations to
17 the Governor, General Assembly, and Commissioner of Agriculture and communicate to the public and
18 policymakers about the importance of young or beginning farmers and ranchers to the future of agriculture
19 and regional food security.

20
21 We support the Cottage Foods Act.

22
23 We support foods prepared in the standards created by the Cottage Foods Act be allowed to be sold in the
24 same building, farm stands, CSAs, etc. as USDA processed and frozen meats.

25
26 We support the efforts to create and fund a director position for the Colorado Food Systems Advisory
27 Council (COFSAC). We support a diversified representation in COFSAC of members of the Colorado
28 agricultural community.

29
30 We support legislation that would increase reimbursement to Colorado institutions for locally procured
31 foods.

32 33 **1. Weights and Measures**

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

36
37 We support laws for standardizing dockage procedures on all applicable crops sold in Colorado.

38 39 **2. Colorado Agricultural Development Authority (CADA)**

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

42
43 We support expanding the role of the CADA to include a state loan program for renewable energy projects.

44
45 We support full disclosure and accountability of all funds dispersed through CADA.

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

3
4 We oppose the use of CADA bonds by large corporations and agribusinesses not owned by local producers.
5

6 **3. State Fair**

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

10
11 We support citizens of rural and agricultural communities serving on the Colorado State Fair Authority
12 Board of Commissioners to promote agricultural-related issues and to further the true mission of the fair.

13
14 The above-stated support of our Colorado State Fair, however, is diminished by the Fair's requirement for
15 premises ID. Since the national Animal Identification System proposal has been dropped by the US
16 Department of Agriculture, premises ID should no longer be required by the State Fair.
17

18 **4. Immigration**

19 As immigration is a federal issue, we oppose the adoption of programs like E-Verify at the state level.
20

21 **5. Labeling and Food Safety**

22 We believe that consumers have a right to know what is in their food; therefore, we support nationally
23 approved labeling standards for foods as they apply in our state.
24

25 We support the labeling of organic products in accordance with the National Organic Standards of Food
26 Production Act as it would apply in our state.
27

28 We support education of consumers regarding food safety and labeling of foods regarding additives and
29 genetically modified and engineered organisms.
30

31 **6. Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)**

32 We urge the legislature and related state regulatory agencies support the vote of the people and not debate or
33 change any aspect of Amendment 14 as passed in 1998 but allow it to work as intended, to set water and air
34 quality standards.
35

36 We will engage with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and other
37 related state agencies regarding the adoption, modification and implementation of any rules and regulations
38 on Confined Animal Feeding Operations.
39

40 **7. Colorado Climate Plan**

41 We urge CDA to work with Colorado State University to develop strategies and incentives to support the
42 implementation of the Strategies and Policy Recommendations of the Colorado Climate Action Plan of 2015
43 regarding agriculture.
44
45
46

1 **8. Urban Agriculture**

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

4
5 We support adding agriculture as a permitted use in all types of zoning.

6
7 We support the creation of dedicated resources or offices within the CDA that support Urban Agriculture.

8
9 We support the classification of high tunnels as temporary as opposed to permanent structures with regards
10 to municipal codes.

11
12 We support ancillary structures in urban and peri-urban municipalities as an agricultural application as
13 opposed to commercial industrial or residential including: animal housing, shade, storage, fencing and cold
14 storage.

15
16 We support the use of greenhouses and hoopouses/high tunnels for specialty crops as an agricultural
17 application, as opposed to commercial or industrial, in urban and peri-urban municipalities.

18
19 **B. Other Government Programs.**

20 We support the improvement to the process for renewing and receiving driver identification for
21 undocumented workers.

22
23 **Article II. Agriculture Technology**

24 **A. Raw Milk**

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

28
29 We support the testing standards and management practices for raw milk production established by the Raw
30 Milk Association of Colorado. We believe the producers have a responsibility for product knowledge and
31 labeling.

32
33 **B. Animal Identification**

34 We oppose any required premise registration for animal identification purposes.

35
36 We oppose any mandatory animal identification program designed to force livestock producers to register
37 their premises through 4-H, FFA, or fair programs.

38
39 We oppose any animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease through
40 traceability because Colorado has workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding
41 animal health.

42
43 **C. Alternative Crops**

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

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

3
4 Due to the expanding local beer brewing industry we support investment in hops, malting barley, and other
5 producer’s opportunities to support Colorado’s microbrew industry.

6
7 We urge the Colorado legislature to support development of the hemp industry.
8

9 **D. Cover Crops**

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

13
14 **Article III. Cooperatives**

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

16
17 We support promotion and establishment of “new generation” cooperatives that enable farmers to sell
18 locally made, value-added, consumer-ready products to provide supplemental income.

19
20 We encourage careful consideration be given prior to any co-op mergers between co-ops and private or
21 public corporations and/or any joint ventures.

22
23 We encourage the formation of cooperatives for industrial hemp growing, processing and seed distribution.

24
25 We recommend cooperative board members, managers, and employees attend training in the philosophy of
26 cooperatives.

27
28 We advocate that economic development agencies, as well as publicly funded schools, colleges, and
29 universities, consider the cooperative business model - and the values of the cooperative principles - as an
30 important alternative to addressing our economic, environmental, and political challenges.

31
32 **Article IV. Water, Land, and Conservation Policy**

33 **A. Land Use**

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

35
36 We support enforcement of statutes that protect landowner rights and rights to privacy, as well as statutes
37 that prevent trespassing and takings.

38
39 We support the use of residential cluster development on less productive land to protect, in perpetuity, more
40 productive land for continued agricultural use.

41
42 We support any additional costs and demands for increased services created by residential and commercial
43 development being paid by the developer.

44
45 We support local control in determining the impacts of natural resource development on the health, safety,
46 and welfare of its citizens and community.

1
2 We urge the implementation of adequate impact fees on new growth that affects agricultural operations. The
3 public should be provided with an impact statement on proposed development.
4

5 We support incentives or programs for land access in urban areas intended for sustained urban agricultural
6 production.
7

8 We support cities and municipalities, through their land use processes, explicitly allowing agricultural
9 operations in non-agricultural zoned properties in urban areas.
10

11 We encourage counties, cities and municipalities to allow farm stands to operate on principle use sites of
12 any size, regardless of zoning. Retail sale of goods from farm stands must include items grown or produced
13 on the principle use site where the farm stand is located.
14

15 We support advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs, that provide opportunities
16 for for-profit and non-profit agricultural entities and strive to support educational commercial farms that
17 teach agricultural and business skills.
18

19 We oppose increasing the size exemption on the 35-acre rule.
20

21 We oppose corporate ownership of Colorado's agricultural land and farms.
22

23 We support revitalization of unused municipal land as farmland.
24

25 We support long-term conservation of farmland and agricultural water access in peri-urban areas.
26

27 **B. Agricultural Land Preservation**

28 We support allowing the use of transferable development rights, conservation easements, and other tools
29 that will keep agricultural lands in production while also providing open space.
30

31 We support the purchase of land by local, regional and national land trusts in pursuit of conservation, soil
32 health, open space, and agricultural preservation or lease opportunities.
33

34 We support cooperation between local and county authorities and landowners on farmland conservation
35 easements to ensure ease of installment of agricultural accessory buildings and other structures necessary for
36 agricultural production.
37

38 When land is purchased for open space with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for agricultural
39 purposes with development restrictions, the resale must be handled by offering that land publicly for
40 purchase at that time.
41

42 We support legislation that requires public entities to honor the terms of a conservation easement.
43

44 We support compensation for agricultural producers who maintain open space, wildlife habitat, watershed
45 protection, clean air, and other natural resource conservation.
46

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

3
4 We support oversight over conservation easements and easement holders.

5
6 We support land link programs to ensure our working lands have a strong continuum of stewardship.
7

8 **1. State and Local Government Lands**

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

11
12 We recommend that the State Land Board follow the recommendations of the local soil conservation
13 districts before any state pasturelands are plowed for farming purposes.

14
15 We support the State Land Board policy of having one principal lessee on trust lands. Multiple use and
16 agricultural uses should be continued on all lands currently in agricultural or grazing use.

17
18 We support an expanded interpretation of “the public good” as it exists in city charters to include for-profit
19 farms, so they can be established on city and county parks and open space lands.

20
21 We oppose the development of any county-mandated land use plan that diminishes the opportunity for
22 agricultural producers to maximize the value of their agricultural land.

23
24 We urge that the current lessee maintain their preferential right on their current lease.

25
26 We oppose lessee assessment of any property taxes on property owned by the state. We support the state
27 paying appropriate local property tax on state lands equivalent to the surrounding area.

28
29 We oppose the wholesale transfer of federal lands to the state.
30

31 **2. Eminent Domain**

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

34
35 We demand the state legislature pass laws to counteract the U.S. Supreme Court ruling (*Kelo v. City of New*
36 *London*) allowing state or local condemnation of private land for private gain.
37

38 **3. Multi-National Corporate Farming**

39 We support legislation that prohibits ownership by non-U.S.-residents of agricultural /food processing
40 operations.

41
42 We are opposed to multi-national processing corporations owning any agricultural land not necessary for
43 production or distribution.

44
45 We urge policies against corporate consolidation of agriculture.
46

1 **C. Preservation of Agricultural Water**

2 We oppose the public trust doctrine.

3
4 We support the doctrine of prior appropriation and oppose efforts to repeal or undo the existing water laws
5 of Colorado.

6
7 We support the implementation of the Colorado Water Plan.

8
9 We support methods for water conservation and efficiency for in-stream use or other agricultural uses
10 without revoking farmers’ and ranchers’ water rights for not using their allocated share under “use it or lose
11 it” water policy clauses.

12
13 We support local control of water resources within the confines of the prior appropriations doctrine.

14
15 We support the Water Conservation Board’s Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) that was formed to
16 assess the water supply-and-demand situation in the state.

17
18 We urge the state engineer to notify all individual water right holders of any modification to policy or
19 regulations within a water basin which is directly affected by that decision.

20
21 We support the state engineer’s authority over the management of rivers and wells.

22
23 We support the management of water to allow aquifers to recharge.

24
25 We support incentives and funding for cities to build land treatment sewage plants if they are not injurious
26 to water users that have a priority for the use of the water.

27
28 As Colorado’s population is projected to grow substantially in the next 50 years, we believe water
29 conservation and efficiency strategies need to be implemented.

30
31 We demand legislation to protect agricultural and individual water rights. We demand municipalities pursue
32 other alternatives for water supplies, including conservation and water projects, before acquiring agricultural
33 water.

34
35 We support the continuation of the NRCS snow surveys and SNOTEL (snow telemetry) measuring stations
36 throughout Colorado.

37
38 We support compensation not be limited to federal crop insurance to farmers when water rights have been
39 curtailed, since the affected crops are planted without knowledge that water would become unavailable.

40
41 We urge development projects provide proof of a sustainable water supply before being issued permits to
42 build.

43
44 **D. Water Diversion**

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

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

3
4 We urge that when water is diverted from one watershed to another, those receiving the benefits of such
5 diversion pay for any damage, including but not limited to increased salinity, decreased quality and quantity,
6 legal fees, and recreational and business income losses.

7
8 We oppose any plan to construct additional trans basin diversions.
9

10 **E. Water Quality**

11 We will closely monitor and participate in regulatory proceedings to establish standards for preserving the
12 quality of surface and underground water.

13
14 We urge everyone to use best management practices and established state and industry standards, in both
15 metropolitan and rural areas, to minimize and mitigate surface and groundwater contamination.

16
17 We support identification of and restrictions being placed on the true source of contamination.

18
19 We support vigorous enforcement of laws and regulations designed to protect the water quality on all
20 Colorado rivers and their tributaries from sewage discharges and storm water runoff.

21
22 We support the Water Quality Control Commission and ask that they maintain their regulation of water
23 discharges from energy exploration and operations.

24
25 We urge water produced in Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) development meet existing state water quality
26 standards for water quality discharge. Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with CBM water
27 must be established to protect adjacent landowners.

28
29 We support preventing chemical and biological contamination in shallow and porous aquifers, and we
30 support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

31
32 We support a flexible state water supply that includes allowing and encouraging water reuse and recycling
33 for food crops.
34

35 **F. Soil and Water Conservation**

36 We urge the continuation of a strong relationship with the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
37 (CACD) and the state technical committee of the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to help
38 maintain present programs and to implement new programs for conserving soil and other natural resources.

39
40 We encourage the CWCB and the CDA to provide grants, loans, technical support, education, and
41 assistance programs to promote voluntary on farm water and soil conservation and efficiency practices and
42 methods.
43

44 **G. Recycling**

45 We encourage the creation of incentives, research, and outlets to facilitate and increase the use of recyclable
46 materials including glass.

1
2 We support the use of modern cogeneration technology that uses waste as fuel.

3
4 We encourage the promotion of recycling and on-farm composting.

5
6 We encourage the development of regional recycling centers throughout the state.

7
8 We support the promotion and generation of at-home recycling pickup programs.

9
10 We encourage statewide initiatives to provide more opportunities, including commercial compost
11 operations.

12
13 We support the recycling of excess food for the highest purposes according to the EPA food recovery
14 hierarchy.

15
16 **H. Alternative Livestock and Non-Amenable Species (Bison, Elk, Deer and Other Exotic**
17 **Species)**

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

19
20 We support the ranching of alternative livestock if it is properly regulated, managed, and licensed by the
21 Colorado Department of Agriculture.

22
23 We request legislative support that all regulatory changes be based upon the best available science, facts,
24 and evidence.

25
26 We oppose the CPW having any authority over livestock and alternative livestock disease or movement
27 issues.

28
29 We support the chronic wasting disease surveillance program for alternative livestock as regulated by the
30 Colorado Department of Agriculture.

31
32 We oppose the management of any facet of the alternative livestock business by ballot initiative.

33
34 We urge consideration of full market value compensation for alternative livestock and other livestock
35 destroyed by the government on private and commercial ranches, except in cases of producer negligence.

36
37 **I. Noxious Weeds and Pests**

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

39
40 We urge stronger enforcement of state laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all lands. This would
41 include federal lands, state and county highway rights-of-way, pasture land, recreation areas, and private
42 housing and subdivision property. Dirt/soil hauled from one location to another should be free of noxious
43 weeds and seeds.

44
45 We support the ongoing effort to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

1 We urge the Colorado state legislature to provide a funding mechanism for the control of noxious weeds and
2 pests that prevents the elimination of plants that will adversely affect pollinator health.

3
4 We urge state, local, and federal governments to plant appropriate native plants along roadways and control
5 noxious weeds in a timely manner.

6
7 We urge continued research into integrated pest management and other alternative methods of controlling
8 noxious weeds and invasive species.

9 10 **J. Fuels Reduction**

11 We urge the legislature to revisit the 2012 legislation that precludes the Colorado State Forest Service from
12 participating in fuels reduction/controlled burn measures.

13 14 **Article V. Energy Policy**

15 **A. Oil and Minerals**

16 We support an assessment of taxes on natural resource extraction adequate to fund resulting infrastructure
17 needs for affected communities and the state.

18
19 We urge mineral rights, if not leased, revert to the surface owner of the holder of the severed mineral rights
20 is delinquent on taxes for three years. If such mineral rights have returned to the surface holder, there should
21 be no separate tax on said mineral rights.

22
23 We urge that if leases are over 5 years old and have not been developed they should be surrendered or
24 renegotiated without question.

25
26 We urge royalty payments be issued within 180 days of completion of drilling of a new well.

27
28 We urge the passage of legislation that gives local governments the authority to regulate off-site impacts of
29 oil and gas development to ensure that companies are in compliance with all applicable rules, regulations
30 and stipulations prior to issuing drilling permits.

31
32 We oppose efforts to initiate commercial leasing of federal shale resources before effectiveness of and
33 impacts from research, development, and demonstration technologies are known.

34
35 We encourage meaningful participation by local governments and the public in the federal leasing process.

36
37 We support adequate funding for state agencies with regulatory authority over oil shale development.

38
39 We support lessees of oil or mineral rights paying for all entries on the land abstracts and all transfers if
40 lease is resold or divided.

41
42 We oppose the sale of federal oil shale lands and mineral rights.

43
44 We support enforcement of monitoring meters on oil and gas wells for purpose of severance tax collection.

45
46 We support the right to explore non-productive oil and gas zones with a primary lease.

1
2 We urge any mining operation provide meaningful assurances such as a bond that they will not harm water,
3 air, or soil quality, or public health, before they are given the required local and state permits to commence
4 their operation.

5
6 We oppose permitting open-pit cyanide gold mines in the state of Colorado, to protect our valuable natural
7 resources, including our ground and surface water.

8 9 **B. Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission**

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

12
13 We support requiring that oil and gas companies publicly disclose all chemical compounds being introduced
14 into the environment in oil and gas production and development.

15
16 We support a working relationship with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) and
17 agriculture agencies to forge productive options and solutions for mineral development compensation.

18
19 We support equal representation by non-industry citizens on the COGCC, including a representative of the
20 health industry and an agricultural landowner.

21
22 We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral
23 development, especially for those circumstances involving a split estate, as well as legal recourse available
24 for disputes to all citizens of the United States.

25
26 Compensation to the surface owner should cover the decrease in fair market value of the surface estate
27 reasonably expected to result from oil and gas operations. Determination of decreased fair market value
28 shall be limited to the portion of the surface estate directly associated with oil and gas operations and should
29 include the loss of agriculture production and income, lost land value, loss of use of access to the surface
30 owner's land, and loss of value of improvements.

31
32 We support setback restrictions of one thousand feet from occupied dwellings including schools and
33 hospitals for drilling site location and tank battery placement.

34
35 We urge landowner input be sought in locating tank batteries and other production structures.

36
37 We demand stringent casing standards be established and enforced to insure bore hole containment
38 integrity.

39
40 We demand comprehensive water quality baselines and adequate subsequent water testing be completed to
41 insure water quality is protected. In addition, we support ongoing monitoring of chemicals using best
42 available technology according to industry standards in all phases of petroleum production.

43
44 We support all produced water either be purified or re-injected to its parent formation.

45
46 We support compensation for damages resulting from earthquakes caused by injection of water and other

1 fluids from oil and gas production.
2

3 **C. Colorado Energy Office**

4 We call on the Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Energy Office to develop a
5 comprehensive energy policy.
6

7 We support a balanced energy policy that conserves and protects our nation's environment and recognizes
8 the special energy needs of America's agricultural sector.
9

10 We ask for state support of alternative and renewable types of distributed power systems. Such state support
11 should include net-metering legislation that allows small-scale energy producers to supply their excess
12 energy to the grid, tax credits, and a buy-down program aimed toward these new systems. The state should
13 encourage energy efficient design and Energy-Star rated appliances for all new construction.
14

15 We support incentives for renewable energy development.
16

17 We support research and development of carbon capture and storage (CCS) facilities and encourage a state
18 policy that landowners will own the pore space that stores carbon, with the understanding that landowners
19 will not share in the risks associated with CCS.
20

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

24 **D. Bio-Fuels**

25 We support the Colorado bio-fuels industry and the use of alternative crops for energy use.
26

27 We urge the use of ethanol-based fuels.
28

29 We support the further development and distribution of E-85 fuel and biodiesel, including long term
30 financial support to build the infrastructure bio-fuel firms say is necessary to compete in the marketplace.
31

32 We support the further development of infrastructure for blender pumps.
33

34 **E. Wind**

35 We encourage the individual or community-owned development and ownership of wind energy and co-
36 generation production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursement to landowners.
37

38 We urge that if leases are over 5 years old and have not been developed, they should be surrendered or
39 renegotiated without question.
40

41 We oppose the severance of wind rights from landowner surface rights.
42

43 **F. Solar**

44 We encourage the development of solar energy, including solar thermal, in Colorado.
45

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

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G. Distributed Energy Generation

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

H. Electric Transmission

We support new transmission corridors if landowners are compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement.

We support annual payments as a form of compensation for easements.

We oppose allowing independent transmission developers siting corridors to exercise eminent domain.

We urge private property owners be invited to be part of transmission planning meetings.

I. Net-Metering Policy

We support net metering.

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

We support community renewable energy projects to allow for greater public participation.

J. 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.

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

We support the dedication of a portion of Colorado’s severance tax revenues to individual and community-owned renewable projects.

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

We support the reservation of transmission line capacity for renewable energy.

K. Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)

We support a state policy that would create an expanded renewable portfolio standard for alternative energy,

1 especially advocating solar, wind, biomass, geo-exchange and bio-fuels.

2
3 We support the state policy that increases the renewable energy standard to 30 percent by 2020 for investor-
4 owned utilities and the 20 percent by 2020 standard for REAs.

5
6 We support state policy that requires life-cycle analysis on all generation options.

7
8 We urge Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA), Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association,
9 Western Areas Power Administration (WAPA) and all the member-owned utilities to fully support the
10 development of distributed renewable energy generation, including opening their grid to purchasing
11 individual and community- owned renewable energy.

12
13 We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources,
14 including but not limited to cellulosic ethanol and woody biomass.

15
16 We encourage the Colorado Energy Office to organize interested stakeholders into a task force on
17 renewable energy to provide research and support for renewable energy programs, bio-fuel production and
18 carbon sequestration.

19
20 We encourage the Colorado Energy Office to work in cooperation with the Colorado Rural Electric
21 Association to conduct a statewide distributed generation study.

22 23 **L. Energy**

24 We direct the legislature to instruct the PUC, the rural electric associations and their power suppliers to
25 prioritize energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy as pre-requisites to approval of additional
26 power generating facilities.

27
28 We oppose the sale of any Power Marketing Authorities (PMA).

29
30 We oppose any deregulation of rural utilities and services that will increase rates.

31
32 We oppose the breaching of any dams generating electric power or providing agricultural water.

33
34 We encourage mitigation and revitalization efforts for local communities that have been negatively
35 impacted by state or federal energy policy.

36 37 **M. Emissions**

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

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

44
45 We support state and national greenhouse gas reduction targets that use a voluntary incentive-based
46 approach to continue the economic viability of farms and ranches.

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Article VI. Economic and Social Policy

A. 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 the establishment of more localized food systems that prioritize investment in regional producers.

We encourage the formulation of policies to promote the institutional procurement of locally and regionally farmed foods.

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

We oppose incentives that attract multi-national businesses and corporations that compete unfairly with local small businesses.

We support the adoption of programs such as the Denver Food Vision across the state.

We support continued research and development of the Colorado Blueprint for Agriculture.

We support the continuation and state funding for the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council.

B. Taxes

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

We support requiring any municipality or utility owning land outside its corporate limits to pay property taxes at the original taxing level.

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

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

We support using a progressive income tax and severance tax for education and other essential government services.

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

We support the increase of severance taxes on all non-renewable energy sources and minerals in Colorado to make them comparable with those of neighboring states.

We support tax advantages to farmers who donate to hunger relief organizations.

1 We encourage state efforts to finance beginning farmers and ranchers including the use of tax incentives.

2

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

5

6 We support the State Legislature referring language to the voters to amend the Gallagher Amendment to
7 equalize residential and nonresidential assessment rates.

8

9 **C. Infrastructure**

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

12

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

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

17

18 We urge the legislature to establish a permanent fund for Watershed Health, to be engaged by interested
19 local governments on a cost-share basis, to hire land managers to grow deep topsoil watersheds, and to fund
20 the quantification of ecosystem service deliverables relative to soil health and to human health.

21

22 We support a study to build a downstream water storage project in the South Platte River Basin to capture
23 flood water from high spring runoff and heavy rain events for supplying water rights of Nebraska and
24 Kansas in a reliable steady fashion, augmenting agricultural water rights in Colorado, recharging the
25 Ogallala Aquifer in portions of eastern Colorado, and supplementing water flows in the Republican River
26 Basin.

27

28 We support those water projects that retain water use in the state of Colorado and encourage construction of
29 additional projects which are directly beneficial to agriculture and the economy of our state, such as
30 Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP).

31

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

33

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

36

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

38

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

42

43 We support impact fees for new houses, multi-family units, and homes with new wells, to be used to fund
44 future water storage projects.

45

46 We support a reduced water rate and waiving tap fees for community-based food systems for producers

1 using municipal sources.

2
3 We oppose any privatization of public water systems or sanitation systems.

4
5 We encourage the State Legislature to consider additional resources to support the state’s transportation
6 infrastructure.

7
8 We support the development of broadband capacity internet to be equitable to urban areas.

9
10 We support regulation equalizing telephone and broadband internet access throughout the state.

11
12 We urge the state invest in rural broadband expansion to support rural economic development, enhance rural
13 communities and allow hospitals and schools to be more effective.

14
15 **D. Workers’ Compensation**

16 We support subsidized workers’ compensation rates and costs for family farms and their seasonal industries.

17
18 We recommend that the workers’ compensation law be amended to recognize the unique nature of
19 agriculture and to provide an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.

20
21 **E. Mechanical Lien**

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

24
25 We support a mechanical lien sunset after a three-year period.

26
27 **F. Wildlife Management**

28 We encourage the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), prior to the process of setting seasons, harvest,
29 wildlife populations, and overall management objectives, provide adequate and proper notice to landowners,
30 farmers and ranchers, in the spirit of cooperation to allow for their active participation, recommendations,
31 and input throughout this process.

32
33 We support equitable damages being reimbursed by CPW for forage and crop losses, damages to fencing,
34 etc., attributable to wildlife even if the landowner or lessee receives bounty or hunting fees on property.

35
36 We oppose wildlife damage compensation in cases where problem wildlife are being harbored, and where
37 crops and associated structures are used primarily to attract and harvest wildlife.

38
39 We request legislative relief by permitting farmers and ranchers free licenses to hunt the legal limits on their
40 own land, as is the practice in other states.

41
42 We support the Habitat Partnership Program.

43
44 We support best management practices in wildlife management administered by the CPW.

45
46 We support that the state of Colorado permits the use of active ingredients (Diphacinone and

1 Chlorophacinone) and other effective techniques for the control of prairie dogs.

2
3 We oppose increasing wildlife populations at the expense of livestock grazing or to the detriment of the
4 ecosystem.

5
6 We urge our state wildlife management agency to develop a comprehensive management plan to reduce the
7 threat posed by chronic wasting disease.

8
9 We oppose wildlife management by ballot initiative.

10
11 We oppose the re-location of prairie dogs from urban to rural areas.

12 13 **G. Animal Welfare**

14 We support teaching animal welfare through educational programs and agricultural organizations.

15
16 We support humane treatment of all domesticated animals, and their right to have proper food, shelter and
17 water.

18
19 We support prosecution of individuals who falsely document, falsely report, anonymously report or
20 manipulate evidence of animal mistreatment. These individuals should be made to provide for a remedy at
21 equity or at law incurred by victims of such false documentation. We oppose the regulation of domestic
22 livestock and animal husbandry by ballot initiative.

23
24 We oppose the adoption of laws that criminalize whistleblowing, documentation, and reporting of animal
25 welfare violations.

26
27 We oppose animal shelters, rescues, and affiliated organizations that are involved in “Retail Rescue”.

28 29 **H. Medical Care**

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

32
33 We support a workable and affordable national universal health care plan to provide equal opportunity for
34 adequate health care for all people.

35
36 We support universal health insurance for Colorado.

37
38 We support a single-payer health care system.

39
40 We support the public and legislative educational work done to raise the issues of healthcare access and
41 affordability in rural Colorado.

42
43 We support the Colorado Provider Recruitment program, within the Colorado Rural Health Center, which
44 assists rural and medically under-served communities in recruiting and retaining health care professionals.

45
46 We also support providing incentives for medical students who agree to serve in rural and medically under-

1 served areas.
2
3 We support investments in Colorado’s loan repayment program, Colorado Health Service Corps, be
4 maintained so that the resource is available for primary care providers serving rural and underserved areas.
5
6 We urge expanded use of physician assistants and nurse practitioners in areas whose populations cannot
7 support a medical doctor.
8
9 We support federal and state funding for rural health clinics and emergency medical services in rural
10 counties that are medically underserved.
11
12 We support rural health clinics and community funded safety net clinics as critical parts of Colorado’s
13 healthcare safety net system.
14
15 We urge these entities be provided the same access to funding that is available to other safety net providers.
16
17 We support the inclusion of rural and community-funded safety net providers in the programs and services
18 included in the Affordable Care Act.
19
20 We urge local medical facilities and hospitals to provide medical care for the indigent and working poor
21 who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid or do not have their own health insurance.
22
23 We support lowering healthcare costs through nutritional education, disease prevention and wellness
24 promotion.
25
26 We oppose the practice of rate banding by healthcare companies.
27
28 We oppose coverage denial based on pre-existing health conditions.
29
30 We support the development of regional healthcare cooperatives to help meet the healthcare needs of the
31 residents in their regions.
32
33 We encourage healthcare companies and insurers to focus on wellness and preventive care, invest excess
34 revenues in improved services and lower premiums, and place people before profits.
35
36 We urge efforts be made to ensure that rural Colorado be included as the state implements a Health
37 Information Technology (HIT) system, to use computer network systems to store, protect, retrieve and
38 transfer clinical, administrative and financial information electronically.
39
40 We urge state and federal legislation to eliminate gaps in incentive funding for rural health clinics and
41 community funded safety net clinics to obtain funds to establish the systems necessary to fully serve their
42 patients with new information technology.
43
44 We support capital investment by federal and state governments to build and sustain the infrastructure for
45 tele-medicine.
46

1 We support state regulation of hearing tests and sales of associated equipment. Those providing these
2 services must be licensed doctors of audiology or trained individuals who have passed the necessary exams
3 and are licensed to provide those services.

4
5 We support published public pricing be required in health care facilities.

6
7 We support a state funded system of mental health services and substance abuse services across the state
8 including in rural areas.

9
10 We support comprehensive legislation that addresses responsible prescribing of opioids and
11 benzodiazepines, when appropriate, and to encourage alternatives under the direction of licensed medical
12 providers.

13 14 **I. Education**

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

17
18 We support strong state funding for public colleges and universities to provide a broad array of post-
19 secondary options for our citizens, and continued state support for public higher education also to keep
20 tuition low and reduce student debt.

21
22 We support additional State Funding for financial aid awards for first generation students at our institutions
23 of higher education.

24
25 We support additional investment in secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs
26 to train young people as electricians, plumbers, welders, mechanics and similar professions needed in rural
27 communities.

28
29 We support public funding for Colorado Experiment Stations and the Extension Service.

30
31 We support educational programs and educational materials and curricula that promote American family
32 agriculture's commitment to food quality and safety, ethical farm practices, a safe and healthful
33 environment, land, water, and energy resource stewardship, sustainability of food supplies, and the value of
34 recycling.

35
36 We support removing financial barriers and disincentives to locally initiated consolidations.

37
38 We support resource sharing between schools and school districts as a local approach to improving the
39 viability of rural schools.

40
41 We oppose any state-mandated consolidation of rural school districts and community colleges.

42
43 We support adequate opportunities for local preschool child care and encourage common-sense approaches
44 to solving any shortage.

45
46 We support the BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) program and encourage the state to identify

1 additional sources of revenue to support this program.

2
3 We oppose “vouchers” that would divert funding from public education to private schools.

4
5 We support agricultural literacy and efforts to combine curricula and disseminate it.

6
7 We support a progressive student loan repayment system based on annual income after graduation. The
8 repayment system will become effective once a minimum annual income is surpassed.

9
10 **J. Food Security and Nutrition**

11 We urge the legislature to appropriate funding to fully participate in the USDA Farmers Market Nutrition,
12 Senior Market Nutrition, and Women Infants and Children (WIC) programs.

13
14 We support implementation and expansion of a “Farm to School (Cafeteria)” program for the school meal
15 programs, including before and after school programs for public and private schools.

16
17 We support food education programs and local food and nutrition seminars.

18
19 We support doubling the value of purchases of fruits and vegetables that are locally and regionally grown
20 and are supportive of the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant program.

21
22 **K. Local Food Systems**

23 We support the following definition of farmers markets: “Two or more farmer-producers or their employees
24 that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public at a fixed or online location, which
25 includes fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, grains, and other agricultural products.”

26
27 We oppose entities not meeting this definition from using the term “Farmers Markets.”

28
29 We support the identification of product origin at farmers markets. We support the expansion of producer-
30 only farmers markets.

31
32 We support the continuation and expansion of SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to farmer’s
33 markets and CSAs.

34
35 We support community supported agriculture/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer co-ops selling
36 directly to restaurants, grocers, and festivals.

37
38 We support farmers markets and other local product initiatives.

39
40 We support and promote the development and integrity of the Colorado Proud program. We encourage the
41 use of the Colorado Proud logo and oppose cancellation of the program.

42
43 **L. Department of Corrections**

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

1 We support supervised and voluntary opportunities for inmates to work to enhance knowledge and build
2 employable skills in the agricultural industry.

3 4 **M. Political Reform**

5 We oppose the use of recall elections to effect policy decisions. Recall should be limited to cases of
6 malfeasance.

7
8 We support removing the Gallagher, TABOR, and Amendment 23 provisions from the state constitution and
9 returning tax and budgeting authority to the State Legislature, the Governor and other appropriate elected
10 officials.

11
12 We support efforts to enable counties and other governmental units to establish agreements about common
13 issues with counties in adjoining states.

14
15 We urge the adoption of public financing of all statewide and state legislative campaigns.

16
17 We oppose the passage of any amendments or laws that limit the effectiveness of elected officials or limit
18 our use of the representative form of government.

19 We support the use of ranked choice voting systems for elections.
20

21 **Article VII. Rural Development**

22 **A. Industrial Siting Act**

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

- 24 ➤ Support for local land use control and the county land use commission in maintaining control of
25 the location and development of heavy industry and mining development. It should be a location
26 that will cause the least impact to agriculture and the rural environment.
- 27 ➤ State agencies should assist local entities in minimizing the impact and use of prime agricultural
28 land for such development through feasibility studies to determine the full impact of selected sites
29 and development.
30

31 We support a definitive procedure ensuring public information with respect to such proposed land
32 development.
33

34 We support a provision to encourage rural towns and communities, if desired, to acquire lands for industrial
35 parks. These parks would be used as a method of controlling the scope and development of industry, which
36 would aid in stabilizing local economies.
37

38 We urge our state government to offer incentives for these new industries to locate in rural areas.
39

40 **B. Transportation**

41 We recommend passage of legislation that would allow weight variance permits for trucks with farm plates
42 of up to 15 percent within 100-mile radius during harvest season.
43

44 We oppose additional railroad mergers and abandonment of service.
45

1 **C. Telephone and Internet Service**

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

5
6 We are opposed to the deregulation efforts that could allow rural areas to be left without a carrier. Service
7 providers that maintain telephone lines should be closely monitored and pricing kept comparable to metro
8 areas.

1 **NEW MEXICO STATE POLICY**

2 We support legislation and regulations that consider the differences between small family farms and
3 ranches, family farm corporations or community and coop businesses operations versus multi-national
4 corporations. Legislation and regulations should reflect differences in scale and the fundamental differences
5 between real persons and corporations.
6

7 **Article I. Government Programs**

8 **A. Agricultural Services**

9 We encourage the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to align and facilitate access to research,
10 informational resources, and agricultural services regarding the needs of rural people, the services available,
11 and responsiveness of agencies. We urge that appropriate testing be made available for local areas for soil,
12 crops, water, etc.
13

14 We oppose any efforts by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to
15 force ditch irrigators to sign up their farms as dryland acres during an irrigation water shortage.
16

17 Furthermore, we believe that producers should not have their irrigated base taken away due to unnatural
18 lake, river and stream conditions.
19

20 We oppose the burden of record keeping for hay and grain producers for bio-terrorism on hay when other
21 safe-guards are already in place.
22

23 **B. Secretary of Agriculture**

24 We favor a system where the governor, rather than the Board of Regents, appoints the secretary of
25 agriculture.
26

27 We support the New Mexico Organic Certification Program to be maintained by the New Mexico
28 Department of Agriculture (NMDA).
29

30 We strongly urge that the NMDA maintain the appropriate state level positions to fully serve producers in
31 meeting the New Mexico Organic Certification Program.
32

33 We encourage that the NMDA continue applying for the federal Organic Cost Share Program.
34

35 We support moving the state office from Las Cruces to Santa Fe.
36

37 **C. Game and Fish**

38 We urge the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to coordinate hunting seasons and area permitting to
39 control nuisance and destructive wildlife.
40

41 We support legislation to allow farmers and ranchers to hunt the legal limits on their own land with the
42 realization that wildlife is owned by the public.
43

44 **D. Public Facilities**

45 We support the use of public facilities and public funds for multiple community purposes that encourage the

1 public good, such as tool sharing programs, community and/or commercial kitchens, etc.

3 **E. Food Safety**

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

6
7 We are in favor of clear and mandatory labeling of additives, meat irradiation and genetically modified
8 organisms in all food. We further believe that there should be better labeling with respect to the number of
9 additives in food products.

10
11 We recommend that all imitation and synthetic products be labeled and disclosed in a clear manner.

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

15
16 We support the efforts by our partner organizations and affiliates to provide food safety trainings and
17 resources to food producers and processors, to meet food safety requirements I collaboration with the New
18 Mexico Departments of Agriculture and Environment, and the Cooperative Extension Services.

19
20 We support full funding of any implementation costs associated with food safety rules and regulations by
21 the appropriate agencies.

22 23 **Article II. Agriculture Technology**

24 **A. Premise Registration and Animal Identification**

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

27
28 We oppose any mandatory 4-H, FFA, or fair program designed to force livestock producers to register
29 premises or animals in a system that is unnecessary and intrusive.

30
31 We oppose any premise registration that:

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

36
37 We believe that these programs have nothing to do with health and security.

38 39 **Article III. Trade**

40 We encourage the increase of economic opportunities for rural and underserved communities working to
41 improve their purchasing options while expanding markets for farming and ranching families while
42 renovating local economic activities.

43
44 We support inter-state, intra-state, and foreign trade of New Mexico agricultural products.

1 **A. International Relations**

2 We oppose the construction of the “Border Fence” between Mexico and the United States.

3
4 **Article IV. Credit Policy**

5 **A. Banking**

6 We urge credit unions be represented by the financial industry as viable institutions important to rural
7 communities.

8
9 We support and encourage the efforts of credit unions that create specific products and services that support
10 New Mexico’s rural communities.

11
12 **Article V. Water, Land, and Conservation Policies**

13 **A. Noxious Weeds**

14 We urge that the state of New Mexico Department of Transportation be required and funded to control
15 perennial noxious, evasive, and poisonous weeds along the state roadways.

16
17 We recommend the use of mite control for bindweed as tested.

18
19 We urge the Natural Resource Conservation Service to enforce the control of weeds on the Conservation
20 Reserve Program lands.

21
22 **B. Land Commissioner**

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

25
26 **C. Water**

27
28 **1. Agriculture Water**

29 We support methods for water conservation and efficiency for water rights or other agricultural uses without
30 revoking farmers’ and ranchers’ water rights for not using their allocated share under “use it or lose it”
31 water policy clauses.

32
33 We urge that all surface water compacts between New Mexico and other states be subject to review and
34 possible re-negotiation considering recent developments for irrigation and municipal water projects. Current
35 restrictions on acre- footage to be held by the state should be adjusted to reflect these issues.

36
37 We support efforts to conserve water by removing invasive species such as salt cedar from all rivers,
38 including the Pecos, Rio Grande and Canadian Rivers.

39
40 We recommend that ground water compacts be negotiated with other states to address any future claims
41 upon aquifers and basins.

42
43 We support positions taken by the 22 water regions supporting regional water plans for future utilization of
44 water resources.

1 When ground water is to be transferred out of state, an impact assessment and public hearing should be held.

2
3 We support the creation of a water trust fund to insure the state has adequate water resources and can defend
4 its interests in lawsuits with neighboring states. Any losses incurred by New Mexico users should be fully
5 compensated by the neighboring state or user that resides there.

6
7 We urge the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer not allow water to be monopolized by any entity and
8 that it not eliminate permits for new drilling of water wells, including supplemental water wells, by surface
9 rights owners.

10
11 We urge that water wells not be allowed to be drilled horizontally and any that are would be plugged with
12 the owner fined based upon the length of well usage and volume of water removed.

13
14 Water produced in the state of New Mexico will not be allowed to be transported outside of New Mexico. It
15 must be put to beneficial use within the state of New Mexico.

16
17 When disputes over surface water arise between states, ground water users near stream flows should not be
18 penalized for loss of downstream flow.

19
20 We oppose all initiatives to tax the use of water.

21
22 We encourage best management practices for the release of water to increase habitat for threatened or
23 endangered species.

24
25 We encourage the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer to use its statutory authority to investigate and
26 enforce the priority call of agricultural waters, rivers, and their tributaries.

27
28 We oppose any efforts to divert agricultural use water to other uses without a full study, and/or payment for
29 loss of use.

30
31 We oppose any attempt to reduce agricultural water use to a lower priority. Agriculture should be raised to
32 second or third priority, with domestic use being first priority.

33
34 We recommend that standards be adopted to deal with possible environmental contamination by industrial
35 and corporate farms.

36
37 We support the development of municipal water projects utilizing existing local reservoirs. We oppose the
38 removal of dams on any river or destruction of any reservoir.

39
40 We recognize the value, growth and importance of the dairy industry to New Mexico. It is critical that this
41 industry be a responsible user and conservator of water resources. It is also essential that this industry exercise
42 due care to protect groundwater resources.

43
44 We oppose efforts by the Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies to force local irrigation
45 districts to release water from reservoirs for habitat preservation without an impact study and public hearing.
46 Producers losing the use of this water should be justly compensated for loss of production.

1
2 We support the development of local water courts and mediation to settle adjudication claims.

3
4 **2. Potable Water**

5 We support the development and completion of water projects by the affected communities as they see fit
6 while protecting their water allocations.

7
8 We do not support the metering of domestic wells.

9
10 We do not support the reduction of domestic well production below three-acre feet per year level.

11
12 We oppose the use of potable water in oil, gas and mineral extraction processing.

13
14 **3. Wastewater**

15 We support the development of a fund for rural areas to give assistance with the mandated updating of
16 septic tank disposal systems, and to assist older treatment systems to comply with current codes.

17
18 We support the reuse of municipal wastewater for agricultural purposes with proper permitting and
19 treatment.

20
21 **4. Water Projects Financing**

22 We urge that any financing for water projects be used for their designated intent and not be diverted to other
23 projects.

24
25 We strongly support the Water Trust Board review and recommend local water supply project applications
26 and provide their list in order of highest priority and project readiness initiatives to the NM State legislature
27 prior to the annual legislative session.

28
29 **D. Property Rights**

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

32
33 We recognize water conservation as a bona fide use of surface and subsurface water rights.

34
35 We support air space remaining as a part of the surface right estate.

36
37 We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral
38 development. Compensation to the surface owner should include but not limited to loss of production
39 income, lost land value, lost access to surface owners’ remaining land, including loss of improvements.

40
41 We support affected landowner’s concerns being addressed when endangered species designations are
42 made.

43
44 We urge that New Mexico farmers and ranchers be appropriately compensated for land and water usage that
45 is restricted because of the Endangered Species Act, Environmental Protection Agency programs, and other
46 related agency programs.

1
2 We support new transmission corridors with landowners being compensated in a fair and equitable fashion
3 for the easement, including the option to include a multi-year payment.

4
5 We do not support the use of eminent domain to transfer private property from a landowner to a for-profit or
6 non-governmental entity without the landowner having the right to negotiate a multi-year payment.

7
8 We do not support eminent domain proceedings for merchant projected corridors. We encourage private
9 property owners are part of transmission planning process.

10
11 We urge that a written agreement be in place prior to entry.

12
13 We oppose any efforts to implement state-wide planning or zoning.

14
15 We support surface rights protection.

16
17 We oppose the mergers of city and county governments.

18
19 **E. Predators and Pests**

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

21
22 We encourage the judicious use of cyanide guns on federal, state, and private lands to control coyotes and
23 wolves to protect livestock.

24
25 We urge New Mexico State University to do research on non-poisonous pest and predator control means.

26
27 We urge the appropriation of federal funds to help control destructive birds because they are a serious crop
28 and health hazard.

29
30 We urge control of destructive insects and rodents on state land adjacent to cropland, using multiple
31 resource methods, to encourage natural pollinators and beneficial wildlife.

32
33 We oppose the Wolf Reintroduction Program.

34
35 **Article VII. Energy Policy**

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

41
42 We encourage members and the public to support renewable energy resources.

43
44 We support the building of the Tres Amigas project, super conductor switching station in Curry County,
45 New Mexico.

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

3
4 We strongly encourage the use of renewable energy products in state, county and city vehicles.

5
6 We support allowing Rural Electric Associations (REA) to increase net metering for agricultural operations
7 and rural businesses.

8
9 We support a revolving loan for renewable energy economic development projects.

10
11 We urge information on carbon credit opportunities be made available to agricultural producers.

12
13 We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects which is tradable.

14
15 We support a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment and supplies.

16
17 We recommend that intra-state prices of natural gas be reduced to compare with interstate prices.

18
19 We support the installation, erection and operation of renewable energy systems with just compensation to
20 the acreage owners.

21
22 We support enactment of a state methane waste prevention rule.

23
24 We urge that oil and gas property tax evaluations are audited and updated regularly and that the valuation,
25 methods, and procedures for collection are both current and fair.

26
27 We support the monitoring of meters on oil and gas wells for purposes of severance tax collection.

28
29 To protect our water, air, land and the public's health, we support regulations that require that oil, gas and
30 mineral companies disclose all chemical compounds being used in the development, production and
31 processing of oil, gas and minerals. We consider this a public safety requirement.

32
33 We oppose the use of potable water in oil, gas and mineral extraction processing.

34 **A. Utilities**

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

36 **Article VIII. Economic & Social Policies**

37 **A. Taxes**

38
39 We support the current property tax program under which agricultural land is taxed on its ability to produce
40 rather than on its sale value.

41
42 We recommend that the tax level be maintained at 33 1/3 percent of the assessed value.

43
44 Increased capital outlay costs should be paid for by taxes raised in an equitable fashion so that the burden
45 will be borne by all segments of the economy.

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

3
4 We recommend that the state drop the sales or excise tax on farm machinery and agricultural production
5 items.

6
7 We recommend that the mileage-use tax on farm trucks be eliminated, and a flat license fee be established
8 and handled by the Motor Vehicle Department.

9
10 We support use of one-tenth of a percentage of taxes collected by municipalities being used for economic
11 development. Specifically, funds generated should be allocated to local economic development corporations
12 for local business and cooperative development.

13
14 We support moving one-tenth of the economic development tax and designate it specifically for rural
15 economic development.

16
17 We urge transparency and accountability regarding the revenues received from the Tobacco Lawsuit into
18 New Mexico's Tobacco Settlement Program Fund and Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund.

19
20 We urge the state of New Mexico to make a \$3 million commitment of tobacco settlement funds distributed
21 from New Mexico's Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund to assist beginning farmers and start-up rural
22 agricultural businesses with operational guaranteed loans and other financial assistance.

23 24 **B. Veterinarians**

25 We urge the state of New Mexico to establish a veterinary program. Until then, we urge New Mexico
26 universities to work with other universities to accept more of our veterinary students.

27
28 We encourage lottery monies to be used for tuition for veterinary students studying out of state due to the
29 lack of an in-state program.

30 31 **C. Alternative Crops**

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

35
36 We support the reintroduction of industrial hemp (defined as *Cannabis Sativa*), having one percent or less
37 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

38
39 We support research into the viability and economic potential of industrial hemp produced in the United
40 States.

41
42 We encourage the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to continue to foster dialog between GMO and
43 non-GMO agricultural interests.

44 45 **D. Gun Control**

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

1
2 We support strict enforcement of existing laws.

3
4 We oppose gun confiscation laws imposed upon U.S. citizens by any local, state or federal agency.

5
6 We oppose the ban on semiautomatic weapons.
7

8 **E. Right to Work**

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

10
11 We support employers' ability to recover the cost of defending themselves when being falsely accused by
12 employees of practices such as but not limited to harassment, discrimination, race, age, sex.

13
14 We oppose any common situs picketing bill.
15

16 **F. Workers Compensation**

17 We support collaborative and cooperative efforts to help reduce workers' compensation rates and costs for
18 family farms, ranches and seasonal industries.

19
20 We recommend that any workers' compensation law recognize the unique nature of agriculture and to
21 provide an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.
22

23 **G. State Education**

24 We support a fair and equitable formula for distributing state education funds.
25

26 We support agriculture education, home economics, vocational-technical training programs, and other
27 occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our free, public educational system.
28

29 We support student loan repayment or forgiveness programs that are accessible and equitable for those who
30 are in agricultural sectors.
31

32 We encourage the review or study of school vouchers.
33

34 We encourage better utilization of rural school systems and facilities by reversing the practice of busing
35 students from rural areas to urban schools.

36 We support continuance of the Perkins Act.
37

38 We oppose diversion of principal from the permanent state fund for education.
39

40 **Article IX. Rural Development Policies**

41 **A. Rural Livelihood**

42 We support rural development that expands our present agriculture economic base and focuses on value-
43 added processing, and aggregation and distribution for agricultural crops, livestock, and renewable energy.
44

45 We encourage the development of an increased supply, distribution and quality of New Mexico foods
46 through food aggregation, wholesale, retail and infrastructure development while providing healthy and safe

1 food.

2

3 We support New Mexico grown produce, agricultural products, and processing of New Mexico raised foods
4 for school meals and other institutions to provide economic opportunities to New Mexico producers.

5

6 We encourage private and public partnerships that support economic development in rural areas.

7

8 We urge that health facilities and staffing be maintained and/or developed in rural communities. We support
9 incentives to encourage staff to live and work in rural areas.

10

11 We support reconsideration of the elimination and/or reassignment of National Guard units out of rural
12 areas.

13

14

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36

WYOMING STATE POLICY

Article I. Government Programs

A. 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 consider leasing and/or buying easements.

We urge that landowners who allow hunting to 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.

B. Endangered Species Act

We support amending the Endangered Species Act with input from affected landowners, tribal and elected officials from a large geographic area before getting a designation under the ESA.

We urge the US Fish and Wildlife Service require the use of the best available scientific data on population trends, available habitat and genetic background in determination of listing and possible protection of any candidate species.

We support legislative delisting the grizzly bear and all wolf species as specified in the ESA by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and barring judicial review.

We support continued efforts designed to keep prairie dogs off the endangered species list. We oppose the listing of the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse.

We applaud the FWS decision not to list the Greater Sage Grouse and oppose any court actions to overturn the decision.

C. Livestock Regulations - Wyoming Livestock Board

We urge state livestock regulations be amended to require owner notification before miss-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.

1
2 We oppose the undue burden placed on livestock producers in the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA)
3 Northwest Wyoming by the requirement of testing for brucellosis.

4
5 We urge USDA’s Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) rewrite brucellosis rules to remove
6 brucella abortus from the select agent list to reflect lessened human health risks.

7
8 We oppose the loss of a state’s brucellosis “free” status based only on infections traced and proven to be
9 from wildlife.

10
11 Producers’ fees for brand inspection should be set at a level to cover actual brand inspection program costs
12 and not general administration, disease prevention or trace back costs.

13
14 Any state beef check-off administrated and collected under the Wyoming Livestock Board statutes must
15 meet the following requirements:

- 16 ➤ All collections on sales will have a provision for refund
- 17 ➤ Be approved by most producers voting on the referendum by mail, with spouses allowed to
18 vote individually.
- 19 ➤ Disbursement of funds collected, and operations of the program are controlled by boards of
20 producers elected by the producers assessed.
- 21 ➤ Major and significant changes in existing check-off programs should be submitted to the
22 producers affected and subject to approval by a two-thirds vote.
- 23 ➤ Programs being formulated or currently in operation be subject to a five- year review.

24 25 **D. Damage Notification Requirements**

26 People causing damage to property, and law enforcement officers investigating such damage, should be
27 required to notify landowners of the damage and parties found guilty of causing the damage to be required
28 to pay the damage.

29 30 **E. Mediation Service**

31 We support mediation between disputing parties to reach workable agreements.

32 33 **F. Conflict of Interest**

34 We support legislation defining conflict of interest for legislators and elected officials.

35 36 **G. Domestic Sheep Grazing**

37 We endorse the “Wyoming Plan” concerning domestic sheep vs. Big Horn sheep grazing conflicts.

38 39 **H. Superintendent of Public Instruction**

40 We support maintaining the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction as an elected position.

41 42 **Article II. Water, Land, and Conservation Policies**

43 **A. Water Law**

44 We encourage the wise use and conservation of underground water between states.

1 We oppose the backdating of water rights.

2

3 We urge that the Wyoming State Legislature prohibit the permanent transfer in use of any existing
4 agricultural water rights to commercial and industrial uses.

5

6 We recommend that the sale of adjudicated irrigation water be limited to agricultural uses.

7

8 We are opposed to allowing holders of water rights to sell any or part of this water for nonagricultural uses.

9

10 We oppose all actions to take water now being used for agricultural purposes.

11

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

13

14 **B. Utilization of Water**

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

17

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

20

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

24

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

27

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

30

31 **C. Water Project Funding**

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

33

34 **D. North Platte River**

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

37

38 **E. Municipal Water**

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

42

43 **F. Water Quality**

44 Water produced in methane development must meet state water quality standards for surface water
45 discharge.

46

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

3
4 We support existing water quality standards effecting agriculture, livestock and wildlife and feel no changes
5 are necessary.

6 7 **G. Land Use**

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

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

15 16 **H. Recycling**

17 The state should encourage all forms of recycling by requiring a deposit on all non-biodegradable recyclable
18 materials.

19
20 We support a statewide recycling project.

21 22 **I. Reclamation**

23 We support passage of a reclamation statute to enforce agreed upon reclamation plans to protect private
24 landowners and the environment. All project requiring reclamation should include bonding requirements to
25 insure completion.

26 27 **J. Noxious Weed Control**

28 We support stronger enforcement of state laws to control declared noxious weeds and pests and require each
29 county to control declared noxious weeds and pests on all lands, with stiff penalties for noncompliance.

30
31 We request the re-establishment of a “state cost share” to aid in controlling prairie dogs and/or noxious
32 weeds.

33 34 **Article III. Energy Policy**

35 **A. Mineral Rights**

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

39
40 We urge that the decision to allow mining and oil companies the use of private lands should lay with the
41 surface owner, and in all cases, compensatory payments should be made to the landowner for all damages
42 incurred.

43 44 **B. Leases**

45 We support changes in existing law to require prior consent be obtained from surface rights owners before a

1 lease may be acquired by mineral companies to develop minerals.

2

3 **C. Oil and Gas**

4 We urge caution in the development of Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) and request all available technology be
5 used in development and reclamation of products and by-products.

6

7 We urge caution in the development of all producing formations and request all available technology and
8 best management practices be used in the development, production and reclamation of oil & gas products and
9 by-products.

10

11 **D. Alternative Energy**

12 We support renewable energy production within Wyoming.

13

14 We support a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) for Wyoming.

15

16 We encourage state-assisted community-sized bio-fuels development and production.

17

18 We support renewable energy developmental and storage rights remaining with surface rights.

19

20 We support reserving a percentage of the capacity of any publicly funded transmission line for power
21 generated from renewable sources.

22 We urge new transmission line routes be sited to maximize wind power opportunities.

23

24 We support state research into alternative crops for bio-fuels use.

25

26 We encourage the individual or cooperative development and ownership of wind energy and co-generation
27 production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursements to landowners.

28

29 We support terrestrial sequestration of carbon, where safety and stability can be assured.

30

31 We strongly support the ownership of pore space remain with the surface owner.

32

33 **Article IV. Economic & Social Policies**

34

35 **A. Education Policy**

36 We recommend the continuation of an elected school board from sub-district areas.

37

38 We support short term borrowing from permanent funds to assist in education funding shortfalls. With the
39 intention these monies, be paid back when funds become available.

40

41 We support the organization of a Farmers Union local for youth at the University of Wyoming. At all levels
42 of education, we stress the primacy of academics over athletics.

43

44 When state school funding reductions are necessary, local districts need to be able to identify their own areas
45 of cutbacks.

46

47 All state education programs mandated for local districts by the state of Wyoming must have accompanying
48 funding. We urge local input be considered when adopting statewide assessments.

49

50 We urge all schools to offer a strong agriculture and vocational education curriculum. We encourage a

1 statewide mill levy to support community colleges.

2

3 We recommend testing at the local level be recognized as a measure of proficiency to guarantee that
4 Wyoming state standards and benchmarks are met.

5

6 **B. Tax Policy**

7 **1. Ad Valorem Taxes**

8 We urge the continuation of the gas tax credit for agricultural production. Agricultural operations should be
9 allowed a five-year average to meet the dollar criteria in qualifying for the credit.

10

11 We urge the state of Wyoming review its assessment procedures in mineral production to reflect verifiable
12 production figures, not company self-assessments.

13

14 We are opposed to a state income tax for Wyoming.

15

16 We oppose a property tax exemption for business and business investment in the free enterprise system made
17 by churches and religious groups.

18

19 We urge the abolishment of payment of taxes under protest.

20

21 **2. Wyoming Inheritance Tax**

22 We oppose a state inheritance and/or estate tax.

23

24 Until these taxes are abolished, we urge tax reform that will allow the value of farm and grazing lands to be
25 based on the productivity of such lands for gift and inheritance tax purposes.

26

27 **3. Sales and Use Tax**

28 We believe that noncommercial sales should be exempt from collecting state sales tax. We ask the legislature
29 to exempt agricultural parts and supplies from sales tax.

30

31 We propose that personal property tax be abolished on agricultural equipment. We strongly support the
32 exemption of farm equipment from sales tax.

33

34 **4. Vehicle Registration**

35 Taxes and licensing requirements on seasonal-use farm vehicles should correspond with length of time in
36 use.

37

38 We oppose any additional increase in vehicle registration fees.

39

40 **5. Severance Tax**

41 We support existing severance and mineral tax rates.

42

43 **C. Workmen's Compensation**

44 We strongly urge that workmen's compensation for farmers and ranchers continue to be optional.

45

46 **D. Warehouse Law**

47 The issuance of warehouse receipts should be mandatory, and the warehouse receipts should post all
48 handling, cleaning and storage charges, pro-rated on actual tare and purity as well as all other information
49 now required by Wyoming law.

1
2 We encourage the legislature to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the stored commodities shall
3 remain the property of the owners that delivered the commodities for storage in the case of bankruptcy of the
4 warehouse.

5
6 We also recommend warehouses be required to issue warehouse receipts no later than 45 days from the date
7 of original delivery as shown by scale tickets or upon request. The scale delivery tickets should be
8 considered proof of ownership until sale or the warehouse receipt has been issued. Warehouse receipts shall
9 be issued on all producer- owned commodities prior to leaving the state. When a warehouse certifies itself as
10 empty, an automatic audit will be triggered regardless of whether the license is renewed or not.

11
12 We demand that commodities stored in warehouses be inspected bi-annually for quality as well as quantity,
13 and more frequently and unannounced as deemed necessary.

14
15 **E. Grain Indemnity Fund**

16 We oppose any grain indemnity fund.

17
18 **F. State Land and Investment Board**

19 We recommend the State Land and Investment Board (SLIB) continue making direct real estate loans to
20 producers. We urge the SLIB to allow irrigation loans to finance renewable energy power systems for
21 irrigation practices.

22
23 We urge continued support of Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan programs.

24
25 We oppose the sale of state school lands. Any sale of state land shall be scrutinized in regard to maintaining a
26 balance, both geographically and economically.

27
28 We recognize that the state trust lands are not “public lands” and the public has no inherent right to access.

29
30 All users should have fees established for use of state school trust lands.

31
32 We urge that current lessee maintain their preferential right when renewing their current lease(s).

33
34 **Article V. Rural Development Policies**

35 We welcome economic development that complements our present economic base rather than jeopardizes it.

36
37 We ask the legislature to provide incentives for rural communities to establish agricultural commodities and
38 bio-fuels processing within the state.

39
40 We urge the state’s economic development efforts be directed toward small community projects.

41
42 We urge economic development in Wyoming be focused on attracting clean industries, paying a living wage.

43
44 **A. Landowner Reimbursement**

45 We support full landowner and fire district reimbursement for damages and fire suppression costs on both
46 public and private properties caused by the railroads.