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2021 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Special Order of Business

<u>Family Farming and Climate Change</u>

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Whereas: family farmers are being significantly harmed by climate change due to more frequent and more extreme weather events, resulting in natural disasters that can span entire regions of our nation, with entire communities suffering disaster impacts for years following the initial event.

Whereas: the great potential for land management and agricultural practice to influence the risk of extreme weather is better understood now more than ever. This places farmers in the unique position to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change by regenerating soils using the crops, livestock, pastures, and woodlands they tend in ways which can allow for carbon accumulation into soils and increased available water storage in the soils of their watersheds. The work of providing healthier land and more functional watersheds, supplying ample healthy food for people, and performing the service of limiting risks from severe weather events to entire human populations, is work best done by family farmers because they are more present on the land and in their local communities.

Whereas: this is work that must be regarded and compensated, like other services or goods produced. Family farmers must have a seat at the table as new political frameworks to address climate change are being developed.

Therefore, be it Resolved: in order to empower family farmers to lessen the negative impacts of climate change, and as a leader in promoting and highlighting the benefits of ecosystems services provided by agriculture, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union supports policies, collaborations with consumers, and efforts throughout the agricultural value chain that encourages:

- ➤ Development of a federal crop and livestock insurance premium structure to incentivize adoption of agricultural practices that encourage growth of deeper topsoils and increase in watershed health and function.
- ➤ Streamlining of the federal crop and livestock insurance program access to ensure family farmers have equal access to coverage that is useful and appropriate for their operation, including for small-scale farms.
- ➤ USDA and private industry to explore opportunities for family farmers to realize financial benefit from optimizing the provision of ecosystem services.
- ➤ Cooperation and collaboration among family farmers to build and expand market infrastructure allowing consumers to choose agricultural products that improve resiliency, grow more soil, and promote healthier watersheds.
- ➤ New opportunities for family farmers to articulate their climate mitigation efforts to consumers through food processors and retailers while protecting competition in the markets that family farmers buy from and sell into.
- ➤ Research, cost-share, and payment programs so family farmers can develop necessary infrastructure and systems to manage and sustain watersheds capable of growing deep topsoils and regulating more effectively the hydrologic cycle.
- ➤ USDA Climate Hubs to coordinate climate information, agronomic and risk management support, and programs that enhance options to allow family farmers to participate in ecosystem service market opportunities.
- ➤ Energy efficiency, renewable energy production, and further development of the bioeconomy on family farms and in rural communities.
- ➤ USDA and other federal agencies to acknowledge existing science on climate change and prioritize research on this issue and to explore connections between existing programs that provide agriculture and rural communities opportunities to both adapt to and mitigate the root causes of climate change and coordinate efforts to enhance the effectiveness of these programs.
- ➤ USDA, the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other state and federal agencies to redouble their efforts to install, maintain, and strengthen new and existing infrastructure and new and existing initiatives to help rural America adapt to our changing climate and the extreme weather events it exacerbates.