

## **WHY SHOULD MEMBERS BE ENGAGED IN PUBLIC POLICY?**

- Agriculture is your livelihood and grassroots political action is a cost of doing business.
- There is strength in numbers—the more individual members engaged in the process the more effective the group.
- Your elected officials need to hear from you personally, not just your lobbyists in Columbus and Washington.
- Politics is a contact sport and only those that have effective contact with their elected officials win.
- Opponents to agriculture are involved and will work against your interests.

## **HOW CAN MEMBERS BE ENGAGED IN PUBLIC POLICY?**

### **PUBLIC POLICY ACTION TEAM**

Farm Bureau has long been an organization that capitalized on the power of working together. It is through collaborative efforts we achieve our individual and organizational goals. To this end each county Farm Bureau has a standing Public Policy action team that has at its core the following functions:

#### **Policy Advancement**

Each year county Farm Bureaus engage in policy development. Through this process our members discuss the major issues that are impacting the agriculture industry and make policy suggestions at local, state and national level to address problems and concerns.

After these policies are adopted it is then important for members and staff to work together to accomplish the policy goals.

#### **Legislative Action**

One of the major goals of Farm Bureau is to provide effective legislative representation for members at the state and national levels.

To be effective, members must work with state and national lobbying staff to communicate with their state and federal legislators to familiarize them with Farm Bureaus' position on legislation.

Through legislative district meetings, FBACT – contact system, the KeyVote program and legislative briefings like Ag Days at the Capital and the Presidents' Trip to Washington, Farm Bureau members have quality interaction with their legislators.

#### **Political Action**

With the advent of term limits and the general lack of agricultural experience among legislators, it is important to elect candidates that understand and are supportive of issues that positively impact agriculture.

To achieve the policy goals of the Farm Bureau, members must establish relationships with their elective officials at all levels. The best way to develop these relationships is to help the officials get elected.

Through the use of the Agriculture for Good Government Political Action Committee, candidate and incumbent reviews, voter registration programs, get-out-the-vote activities and candidate-support committees, Farm Bureau can help elect agriculture friendly candidates who in turn will help Farm Bureau protect the interest of the members.

## **LOCAL POLICY ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM**

### **Preface**

The cornerstone of Farm Bureau's success over the years has been the grassroots process that has governed the development and advancement of policy. Each year County Farm Bureaus go through a rigorous process to develop policies. Once these policies are approved by the membership at the county Farm Bureau annual meeting, the board of trustees works to try to advance the policies on behalf of the membership. The county Farm Bureau Public Policy action team is charged with the responsibility of developing a program plan to advance policy.

Components of the Policy Advancement Program

- Strategy for Policy Advancement
- Local Official Contact
- Informational Meetings

## **I. STRATEGY FOR POLICY ADVANCEMENT**

### **Purpose**

To develop a plan of action to address each policy assigned to the Public Policy action team. Every policy statement is unique and will require different action to advance it. This will ensure that each policy position is given the proper attention the county Farm Bureau expects when the issues were voted on at the annual meeting.

### **Suggestions**

Below are some suggestions to assist the Public Policy action team in developing strategies for policy advancement:

- In the first Public Policy action team meeting, the action team members should review the policies given to them by the county board.
- The policies should be organized based on the following criteria:
  - 1) What priorities did the board set?
  - 2) What is the scope of the policy and the time needed to advance the policy?
  - 3) Who will be involved in the process?
- Complete the Policy Strategy Worksheet (found in Appendix B)

- Action team members should accept specific duties to advance policy, such as setting up informational meetings or doing research on a particular subject.
- The Public Policy chair may decide to appoint sub-action teams to carry out the action.

By taking the time to plan a strategy for each policy item, the Public Policy action team will be better equipped to tackle the issue and will increase the chances of success.

## **II. LOCAL OFFICIAL CONTACT**

### **Purpose**

To build and maintain relationships with both elected and non-elected officials at the local level. Farm Bureau leaders should know who these officials are, know how to contact them and be comfortable in making contact with them on issues relevant to county Farm Bureau Policy.

### **Suggestions**

The following are some things to consider as you establish contact with your local officials:

- Completely fill out the Local Official Roster (found in Appendix B). This will ensure that the information is readily available when it comes time to make a specific contact.
- The action team members should contact local officials directly involved, explain county Farm Bureau policy and request their assistance in advancing that policy.
- Be aware of when elected local officials are up for reelection and be supportive of "agriculture friendly" elected officials, such as county commissioners and county auditors.
- Build relationships that are mutually beneficial, rather than just a constituent/official relationship.
- Meetings with public officials should have clear subject matter and objectives. Meetings used to put officials on the hot seat are not useful and will greatly diminish the relationship with that official.
- If an official's position on a policy matter is different than that of Farm Bureau, action team members should work with that official to inform them of our position.
- The action team should be cautious when inviting the media to meetings with officials. The media should be used to build relationships and convey information, not to put the official on the spot. Press releases and photographs can demonstrate how the Farm Bureau is working with officials to solve problems.
- Make every effort to be helpful to officials. The county Farm Bureau can help them publicize a meeting or be a resource on an issue. Do not leave the official with the impression that the only time the Farm Bureau calls him or her, is when the organization needs something.

Time and effort spent becoming more familiar with the policymakers in your county and building those relationships will pay big dividends as the action team works to advance Farm Bureau policy.

### **III. INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**

#### **Purpose**

To gather background information on specific issues relevant to Farm Bureau in order to advance policy. The county Farm Bureau uses this information to help determine the action needed to advance policy. Informational meetings should also be used to examine an issue where the county Farm Bureau has no clear policy position. The information gathered will help determine if action by the board is needed. The county Farm Bureau should hold at least three informational meetings during the program year; one focusing on a local policy, one on a state policy and one on a national policy.

#### **Procedure**

After developing a strategy to advance a specific policy position, it is likely that the Public Policy action team will need to hold an informational meeting to investigate the issue. Once a resource person(s) have been identified, they should be contacted and asked to provide information to the county Public Policy action team. The attendees at the meeting will depend on the scope of the policy. Sometimes it will be appropriate for members of the Public Policy action team and/or the county Farm Bureau board to attend, but other times it may be appropriate to invite the entire county membership or the general public. It is important to keep in mind the purpose of informational meetings—to advance county Farm Bureau policy.

#### **Suggestions**

- Identify resource persons as early as possible to make it easier and timely to schedule an informational meeting.
- The resource person should clearly understand what they are asked to speak about and who their audience is. Be sure not to blindside them.
- Use media carefully. Press releases and photos work well after-the-fact. If live media is necessary (TV, radio, and newspaper reporters) the meeting should be controlled and on task.
- The audience should be appropriate for the issue being discussed.
- Use the Issue Action Flowchart (found in Appendix B) to determine if the information gathered is useful and what action Farm Bureau should take.
- Complete an Informational Meeting Report Form (also found in Appendix B).

Informational meetings are an integral component in advancing Farm Bureau policy. When properly conducted, the Public Policy action team and the county board will have the appropriate information to take action on an issue.

### **LEGISLATIVE ACTION PROGRAM**

## **Preface**

Farm Bureau has a long tradition of being one of the most recognized organizations at the Ohio Statehouse and the U.S. Capitol. This continues to this day because of our comprehensive grassroots efforts. Few organizations have the luxury of such strong, active memberships in every county in the state. However, in light of term limits in Ohio and a decline of agricultural knowledge, the political and legislative dynamics have changed drastically. This program is designed to help Organization Directors (OD) and county Farm Bureau leaders assess their current relationships with their legislators and focus their efforts on building new contacts where needed.

### **Components of Legislative Action Program**

- Legislative District Meetings
- FBACT - Contact System
- KeyVote Program
- Legislative Briefings

## **I. LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT MEETINGS**

### **Purpose**

To coordinate organizational activities between the county and state Farm Bureaus to effectively build and maintain relationships with legislators. These meetings give county Farm Bureau leaders an opportunity to build the foundation that supports the lobbying activities Public Policy staff. Members reinforce Ohio Farm Bureau policy positions in legislative district meetings.

### **Operating Procedures**

Each legislative district will have one OD to serve as the meeting coordinator. This OD will coordinate with members and other ODs in legislators' districts to plan the meetings.

- Schedule Legislative District Meetings from February to April.
- Monday and Friday all day, as well as, Thursday evenings are the best time to schedule the meeting because legislators are typically in the districts on these days.
- Assign issue topics, as defined by Farm Bureau legislative priorities, to various action team members to ensure all issues are covered.
- Additional meetings can be held later in the year as need arises to address special issues.

Before a legislative district meeting, the OD should contact the Public Policy Department to obtain specific information on the legislator and an issue update. Public Policy staff will be available to provide briefings to members before the legislator(s) arrives to explain issues and legislation status.

After the meeting, the Legislative District Report Form should be completed by the OD and returned to the Vice Presidents of Field Services and Public Policy.

## **II. FBACT – CONTACT SYSTEM**

### **Purpose**

To have an effective grassroots legislative contact system in place at the county Farm Bureau level. The Farm Bureau Agriculture Contact Team (FBACT) is an important tool to be used selectively by the county Farm Bureau to maintain interaction with legislators.

FBACT is a two-fold system of contacts that includes:

#### 1) Key Contacts

- State Legislative Key Contact
- Congressional Key Contact

#### 2) Phone Tree for Mass Contacts

The success of FBACT depends on each individual understanding the system, making certain they know who to contact, what action is needed and have a working knowledge of the issues involved.

### **Procedure**

#### Key Contacts

Public Policy action teams should identify two people on the action team to serve as Key Contacts. One volunteer would take the lead on state issues; the other would be responsible for national issues. These individuals should have (or be willing to develop) a good working relationship with these legislators. This would be accomplished by more frequent contact with the lawmakers and access to more information on important issues. It is strongly recommended that these individuals have access to email and/or fax machines, as speed and ease of contact are a necessity. These individuals would be the point people on the Public Policy action team when making legislative contacts and will receive regular updates on issues and legislation.

The main responsibility of Key Contacts is to provide ongoing communication with lawmakers on issues of importance to Farm Bureau. This will complement lobbying efforts made by the OFBF Public Policy staff.

#### FBACT Phone Tree for Mass Contact

There are times when it will be necessary to contact legislators through the FBACT Phone Tree. Mass contact is especially important when an issue is about to be considered by the entire legislative body (House or Senate). This is the time when the lawmakers need to gauge the position of their constituents before they decide how to cast their vote. Suggestion: It is appropriate to use the county Farm Bureau board members to be the names on the phone tree. Board members are elected by the membership, and this would

be an important way to involve them in the legislative action program. Below is the process for implementing the phone tree:

Each county should have a completed FBACT Phone Tree (found in Appendix C) that should be copied and distributed to the members whose names appear on it. This will ensure that each member on the phone tree knows who they are supposed to call and who else is on the grid.

Once the OD activates the phone tree in the county, each Farm Bureau leader tree will contact the appropriate person on the grid and then contact the requested legislator. If a person on the grid cannot be reached, the next Farm Bureau Leader on the phone tree should be called to keep the system going.

#### Distribution of Information

- Legislative Fact Sheets - For issues that will likely require contact, Legislative Fact Sheets will be prepared in advance for the people on the phone tree. When the phone chain begins, each caller should remind the next Farm Bureau leader on the phone tree to refer to the Legislative Fact Sheet.
- FBACT Request Form (found in Appendix C) - In those cases where no fact sheet has been sent, the information will be given over the phone. Members will be requested to make phone calls, send e-mails, or write letters depending on the timing and the issue involved. As each Farm Bureau leader receives the information, he/she should write down the information on the Request Form and relay the same information to the next Farm Bureau leader on the phone tree. Organization Directors will be providing the FBACT Request Forms. There is one copy in Appendix B of this book. The form can also be found online on the Ohio Farm Bureau website.

### **III. KEYVOTE PROGRAM**

#### **Purpose**

To track important votes cast by members of the General Assembly and Congress. Legislators must understand the votes they cast will determine if they receive the "Friend of Agriculture" designation. The KeyVote Program will hold legislators accountable for how they vote. This program is not meant to penalize legislators that do not vote in favor of Farm Bureau policy, but rather it is meant to recognize in a positive manner the legislators that are truly "Friends of Agriculture".

#### **Operation Procedures**

The Public Policy staff is continually reviewing legislation being debated at the Statehouse and at the U.S. Capitol. The Public Policy staff will determine, based on priorities set by the State Board of Trustees and Farm Bureau policy, if a particular bill should be designated as a KeyVote. While the staff works on many bills, those

designated, as KeyVotes are a select few that are important to agriculture and rural Ohio and Farm Bureau policy is clear.

Once a KeyVote has been designated, it becomes a priority for the Public Policy staff. Before important votes the legislators will be informed that the bill is an OFBF KeyVote. All KeyVotes will be published in appropriate Farm Bureau publications, such as *The Buckeye Farm News* and the OFBF website.

#### **IV. LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS**

##### **Purpose**

To educate members about ongoing legislation and issues. These events also serve as an opportunity for members to interact with their representatives in Columbus and Washington.

##### **Ag Day(s) at the Capital**

Each February, county leaders from around the state come to Columbus for one or two days of seminars about the prominent issues impacting agriculture in the Ohio General Assembly. The event is centered on a legislative reception or meal that allows members to interact with their state legislators.

##### **Presidents' Washington, D.C. Trip**

Each March, all county Farm Bureau presidents are invited to go to Washington for several days of issue briefings. During the trip the presidents have an opportunity to speak with their congressional representatives. In addition, the America Farm Bureau hosts the presidents in a discussion on the status of federal legislation impacting agriculture nationwide.

##### **Young Farmers' Trip to Washington D.C.**

Each September, a select group of young farmer leaders are chosen to go to Washington, D.C. for several days of legislative orientation and issue briefings. Like the county presidents, these young farmers have an opportunity to interact with their member of Congress.

##### **Key Farmer Trip to Washington, D.C.**

Each Winter, a select group of farmer recognized as local leaders and who are not involved with Farm Bureau, are chosen to go to Washington, D.C. for this trip. The purpose of the program is provide a valuable opportunity for these farmers to learn more about the public policy process and how it impacts our agriculture industry and Farm Bureau's involvement in this system. The goal is to develop an interest with these individuals to become active in Farm Bureau.

## **POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM**

### **Preface**

Like the Legislative Action Program, this program is designed to help county leaders and Organization Directors develop and maintain the necessary relationships with state and federal elected officials. This program ties together both the political and the legislative programs through the following initiatives.

#### Components of the Political Action Program

- Agriculture for Good Government PAC
- Incumbent Reviews
- Open Seat Reviews
- Member Voting Guides
- Voter Registration Program
- Get-Out-The-Vote Program
- Candidate-Support Committees

## **I. AGRICULTURE FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (AGGPAC)**

### **Purpose**

To exert a strong influence in the election of candidates for the U.S. Congress, the Ohio General Assembly and other state elective offices. AGGPAC (formerly known as APEP) backs qualified candidates, who support the policies and philosophy of the Ohio Farm Bureau regardless of their party affiliation. AGGPAC provides such candidates with financial support needed to win their election.

### **AGGPAC Contributions**

Contributions can be made by personal check (corporate checks are prohibited by law). Most of the AGGPAC revenue comes from \$1 or \$2 voluntary additions to the membership dues notice.

### **AGGPAC Candidate Support**

After analyzing various criteria, including county Farm Bureau relationships, voting records, and other appropriate information, incumbent candidates who have records that are supportive of the policies and philosophy of the Ohio Farm Bureau will be considered "Friends of Agriculture" and will receive financial support from AGGPAC.

With term limits now a reality there will be a number of open legislative seats for the Ohio Legislature every two years. As is the case with friendly incumbents, we want to help elect open seat candidates that are supportive of Ohio Farm Bureau policy and

philosophy. After conducting a rigorous screening by the county Farm Bureau of all candidates in an open seat race, the Ohio Farm Bureau will designate a "Most Agriculture Friendly Candidate" and an AGGPAC contribution will be made to the campaign of the "friend."

The next sections describe in more detail the process for evaluating both incumbent and open-seat candidates used to determine support.

## **II. INCUMBENT REVIEWS**

### **Purpose**

To review the performance of incumbent legislators. This is an important part of effectively achieving OFBF policy at the state and national level. Reviewing the performance of those that represent us will hold them accountable and will help determine if Farm Bureau will support their bid for re-election. There are two stages in the review process:

### **Informal Incumbent Review**

This review consists of a county Farm Bureau board filling out a simple survey sheet and returning it to the Public Policy Department. This survey is a vehicle to help the county Farm Bureau reflect on the responsiveness and the voting record of their incumbent legislators. These reviews would be most effectively conducted at the November or December board meetings in the first year of the legislative biennium. This tool will help the county Farm Bureau gauge the legislator's performance and leaves a year to work on building a relationship where necessary or improving on an existing one.

### **Formal Incumbent Review**

County Farm Bureau boards conduct this review in the summer months in the final year of the legislative biennium. During this review, the county Farm Bureau board invites the legislator to the board meeting, or other session, to discuss the previous legislative cycle.

## **III. OPEN SEAT REVIEWS**

### **Purpose**

To work jointly with the county Farm Bureaus to screen all the legislative candidates with races resulting from term limited incumbents. Term limits is forcing organizations to change their approach to elections to the Ohio legislature. OFBF developed this nonpartisan process to be employed after primary elections. Farm Bureau needs to identify and work to elect "agriculture friendly" candidates if we hope to reach our goals.

### **Candidate Questionnaires**

The initial step in the open seat process is the completion of the Farm Bureau questionnaire. The questionnaire provides us with some biographical background on the candidate, the organization of their campaign and their position on issues that are important to us. In addition to the questionnaire, candidates will receive some background information to help them educate themselves on our organization and issues.

If the candidates want to be considered for Farm Bureau support in the general election and to move to the second step in the process they must complete the questionnaire by the appropriate deadline.

### **District Evaluation Meetings**

The completed questionnaire will be sent to the appropriate Organization Director so they can organize an evaluation meeting with the candidate and the evaluation committee. This committee, consisting of county leaders, will ask a variety of questions, based in part on the answers to the questionnaire. Once the evaluation meeting has taken place, the committee will then make a recommendation to the Ohio Farm Bureau on which candidate they feel is most agriculturally friendly and to what extent we should become engaged in their campaign.

### **Farm Visits**

In order for officeholders to truly understand and appreciate what Ohio agriculture is all about they need to experience it first hand. Our members have said that they would like to see candidates and elected officials take the time to tour a farm operation. Therefore, a final requirement for open seat candidates is a short visit to a farming facility in their district.

## **IV. MEMBER VOTING GUIDES**

To elect agriculture friendly candidates at all levels requires that our members know who the candidates are and what the candidates' positions are on relevant Farm Bureau issues. To accomplish this goal, Public Policy action teams should consider creating a voter guide for members to use when they go to the polls on Election Day. (Guidelines for developing voter guides can be found in Appendix D.)

## **V. VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAM**

As was mentioned above, electing candidates that are friendly to agriculture requires our members to be informed voters. Even more fundamental is the need to ensure that our members are properly registered to vote on Election Day. Conducting a timely and effective voter registration program will allow more members to vote for candidates that support Farm Bureau policies and positions. (Guidelines for planning a voter registration program can be found in Appendix D.)

## **VI. GET-OUT-THE-VOTE PROGRAM**

Once members have been properly registered to vote and they have been informed of the agriculture friendly candidates, the Public Policy action team must work to ensure that our members go to the polls and vote. Despite the fact that farmers represent only 2-percent of the population, a higher farmer voter turnout can guarantee that we have a

disproportionately large voice in the public policy process. (Guidelines for planning a Get-Out-The-Vote program can be found in Appendix D.)

## **VII. CANDIDATE-SUPPORT COMMITTEES**

An important component for helping elect friendly candidates is to develop support committees consisting of farmers. These committees are a resource of information for the candidate on agriculture issues as well as a list of volunteers who are willing to help with campaign activities. (Guidelines for candidate-support committees can be found in Appendix D.)

## **INFORMATION RESOURCES**

### **I. PEOPLE**

#### **Organization Directors**

The Organization Directors (ODs) are your first resource for information at the county level. ODs are trained in all the program areas and serve as liaisons between the members and the state staff.

In addition, each spring the ODs obtain training and issue updates from the state Public Policy staff.

#### **OFBF Public Policy Staff**

The Public Policy staff can assist you with questions dealing with issues as well as Public Policy programs. While you should first look to the ODs for answers, the state staff is available to help you.

### **II. PUBLICATIONS**

#### **OFBF Legislative Agenda**

With the beginning of each Congress and General Assembly the Ohio Farm Bureau State Board of Trustees outlines our legislative agenda. The vast majority of this agenda is defined by the Farm Bureau policy that is set at the annual meeting. The State Board then takes the policy and prioritizes the issues that the Public Policy staff uses to guide them as they work with legislators.

#### **Buckeye Farm News**

The *Buckeye Farm News* will be the main source of information on government and grassroots issues. The Public Policy pages include information like legislative updates, legislator profiles and in-depth analysis of state and federal issues.

#### **OFBF Website**

Like the Buckeye Farm News, the OFBF website is a key source of information. The Government & Grassroots section of the website gives members the opportunity to look-up their federal and state legislators and communicate with them directly on line. In

addition, members will be able to offer policy development suggestions, review key issue backgrounders and access the information on key legislation.

### **III. MEETINGS & EVENTS**

#### **Legislative Briefings**

As was mentioned earlier, Ohio Farm Bureau sponsors a number of Legislative Briefings that provide members with an opportunity to meet face-to-face with their legislators. These briefings also provide county leaders with critical issue updates to keep them informed.

#### **Leadership Conference**

Leadership Conference is an annual opportunity for Public Policy Action Team Leaders to come to Columbus for two days of intensive training on the purpose and functions of their action teams. In addition, the Public Policy Action Team Leaders are provided with substantive issue information from both the state staff and outside experts.

#### **Regional Cabinet Meetings**

Regional Cabinet Meetings are an annual continuation of the training provided at the Leadership Conference. The emphasis at the Regional Cabinets is to gauge the progress counties are having in developing their Public Policy action teams and outlining their program of work.

#### **OFBF Annual Meeting**

The OFBF Annual Meeting is the culmination of yearlong effort of the county Farm Bureaus to develop new policy and make changes to old policy. Delegates from each county come to Columbus to vote on proposed policy. The annual meeting is also an opportunity for leaders from different counties to interact on issues that are impacting them and to share successes and setbacks.

## **– APPENDIX A – GUIDE TO PUBLIC POLICY ACTION TEAMS**

### **BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ACTION TEAM**

#### Before recruiting your action team:

- Meet with Advisory Councils or speak with Advisory Council chair to obtain the names of the Public Policy representative from each council in the county.
- Public Policy chair should review policy passed by the membership at the annual meeting.
- Public Policy chair should meet with the county Farm Bureau president and Organization Director to discuss responsibilities of action team members and brainstorm for names of potential members.
- Action team should be geographically diverse.
- Make sure the action team is representative of the county's agricultural profile. In other words, try to get representation from various producers, like cash crops, livestock, nurseries, specialty crops, etc.
- Try to recruit members that could be the action team specialist for a particular topic. Such as education, water quality, land use, etc.

#### Once you have a action team:

- Send a letter re-affirming the expectations of action team membership – such as number of meetings expected to attend, contacts with local or state officials, helping to prioritize issues, etc.
- Send all members of the action team copies of your approved policy.
- Keep in touch with the action team members and update them on issues.
- Assign members to projects or to sub-action teams to spread the workload.

### **PUBLIC POLICY CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Work with the county Farm Bureau president, their cabinet and the Organization Director in developing a program plan that will:
  - A. Carry out the policies adopted at the county Annual Meeting.
  - B. Recruit a functioning Public Policy action team (see Building Blocks of a Good Action team)
  - C. Encourage the Public Policy Action team members to surface issues and develop a plan of action to address those issues.
  - D. Support Ohio and American Farm Bureau policy efforts.
  - E. Complete the Standards of Achievement form at the end of the program year.
2. Strive to secure action by action team members at each action team meeting. It is important to remember that all action programs must concur with policy and/or be approved by the county Farm Bureau board.
3. Stay informed on local, state and national issues in order to give sound and aggressive leadership to the action team.
4. Involve Action team Members:
  - A. Urge them to be alert to community and county problems and issues.
  - B. Assign duties where appropriate.

- C. Urge attendance at meetings, such as: Ag Days at the Capital, local zoning hearings, water shed group meetings, etc.
  - D. Request that the Advisory Council representatives assist in educating and securing action from their Advisory Councils on Public Policy issues.
5. Follow up on action team assignments to see they are completed.
  6. Work with the Organization Director to develop an FBACT -Contact System. This team will be used to contact legislators in a fast, efficient and effective manner.
  7. Attend Regional and State Public Policy meetings and report back to the action team and the county Farm Bureau board.
  8. Be aware of your Public Policy action team's budget and use it to achieve the action team objectives.
  9. Build relationships with your legislators and local government officials in order to familiarize yourself with their duties and responsibilities.
  10. Have fun!!!

## **Policy Strategy Worksheet**

**Use this worksheet to help develop a strategy to advance Farm Bureau Policy.**

**The purpose of this exercise is to clearly identify information resources and to determine what action(s) are needed to advance the policy.**

**Policy to be Advanced:**

**What resources or people can help you advance the above policy? (i.e. government resources, community leaders, etc.)**

**Is it necessary to designate a member of the Public Policy Action team to take the lead on this issue? Yes or No  
If yes, then whom?**

**Is it necessary to appoint a sub-action team to research this issue? Yes or No  
If yes, then who will serve on this sub-action team?**

**What course(s) of action is/are necessary to advance this policy?**

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

## **– APPENDIX C – GUIDE TO LEGISLATIVE ACTION FBACT - CONTACT TIPS**

### Tips for Telephone Contacts

Advantages:

1. Less time consuming
2. More effective as you get an immediate reply
3. Can discuss subject and handle their questions and concerns

Disadvantages:

1. Costs more than a stamp, if long distance
2. May have difficulty making the contact
3. Need better knowledge of subject to answer possible questions

Where to call: It is best to call the Columbus office for state legislators or the Washington office for federal legislators. If they are not in, a staff member may be able to help or will suggest a time to call back. An alternative is that the legislator may choose to call you back.

It is possible to call their residence, but it is possible that no one will be home or you may get the answering machine.

When to call: It is best to ask the legislator or their staff to know for sure, but a rule of thumb is early morning office hours (8-9:00 a.m.) Tuesday through Thursday, or at home when not in session.

What to say: The first step is to always identify yourself, where you live location, who you represent and your occupation.

The second step to know what you are going to say. Be prepared with a couple of key talking points that you want to address. Don't pick up the phone without a few notes down on paper.

You can refer to the OFBF website, priority fact sheets or the Buckeye Farm News for specific information about legislation.

Example: "Hello Senator, this is John Doe from Louisville, Ohio. I am a farmer and a Farm Bureau member in Stark County. I have concerns about \_\_\_\_\_, which supports our Farm Bureau Policy on this issue."

What not to say: Don't say, your are a Democrat or Republican. Most legislators don't care; they serve a district, not just one party!

Don't spend time apologizing for calling, you are not bothering them. They were elected to serve the public and welcome the contacts.

Try to stick with one issue per phone call. Talking about more than one topic can be confusing and less effective.

How often to call: There is no concrete answer to this. Use common sense. A once a month routine is acceptable. During a "hot" issue, once a week is not too much. It really depends on the issue.

– **APPENDIX C** –

**Tips For Letter Writing**

Advantages:

1. Costs less than a phone call
2. Guarantees a contact and a written response you can share with others
3. Ability to write all details on the issue concisely
4. Don't have to know subject as well.

Disadvantages:

1. Do not get an immediate response
2. Takes more time to write a letter
3. Cannot answer the legislator's questions

Where to send letters: The best place is to the office. During the months of January – June, the legislators spend more time near the office than at home. Also, their staff is available to help with the mail process.

What to say: It is important to include your return address on the envelope. Legislators like to see mail from their district.

Identify yourself, where you live, occupation, who you represent and include your phone number. There is a chance the legislator would rather call you with an answer than to write.

Write about only one subject per letter. As with phone calls, addressing more than one issue can be confusing and less effective.

Refer to the bill by its name and number.

Be businesslike, not long winded. Get to the point and state your position clearly. Be courteous, but clear.

Tell them how it will affect you. You are their constituent and examples from their district and constituents have a great impact.

Make sure you explain specifically why you are for or against the bill. Refrain from simply asking to vote no, relate your specific concerns.

Write plainly. A letter that is difficult to read loses a lot of its power.

If they deserve a letter of thanks, write it. Legislators like to hear positive remarks, just like the rest of us.

Sign the letter. Unsigned mail generally gets thrown away.

Length of letter: Two to four paragraphs are sufficient. State the problem and what you are asking. A couple of pages is too long.

**– APPENDIX C –**

What not to do: Do not send a photocopy letter

Do not have six people all write the same thing and send them together. If this is the case, then send one letter and have everyone sign it.

Do not misidentify your legislator! For example, a Senator is not a Representative and your Ohio legislators are not Congressmen.

Don't threaten them with a lack of support or a fight in the next election.

**How to Address A Legislator:**

OHIO REPRESENTATIVE  
The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43266-0603

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE  
The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. House of Representatives  
\_\_\_\_\_ House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

OHIO SENATOR  
The Honorable  
Ohio Senate  
State House  
Columbus, OH 43266-0604

U.S. SENATOR  
The Honorable  
United States Senate  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

GOVERNOR  
The Honorable  
Governor of Ohio  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43266-0601

## Tips For Conducting A Legislative District Meeting

Though the Organization Director will undertake most of the planning for the meeting, the chair is in charge of conducting the meeting. If there are multiple Public Policy Action Team Leaders in the district, then this duty should alternate among them.

Preparation: Assure that both Farm Bureau members and the legislators will be on hand.

Have specific issue information to each Farm Bureau member before the meeting.

Ask Farm Bureau members to come early to the meeting and determine which member will present the Farm Bureau's position on each issue and to which legislator.

Outline structure of the meeting, and brief them on issues to be discussed.

Let the legislator know ahead of time what issues you want to discuss.

At the Meeting: Arrange the room in such a manner that everyone can speak easily with the legislator.

Make the appropriate introductions.

Keep the atmosphere informal but organized.

If a meal is included, keep the conversation going on the issues while you eat

Give the legislator time to speak to the group, but only after the selected individual members have presented Farm Bureau's policy on the issues.

Be prepared with questions to keep the conversation going.

Stay away from small talk after the opening and introductions.

### Sample Agenda:

10:45 a.m.	Call to Order Purpose Introductions Challenge to report back – Councils/Board
10:55 a.m.	Briefing State issues Assignments to action team
12:00 noon	Greet Legislator upon Arrival

Working Lunch with Legislator  
Introductions  
Discussion of issues  
Photo session

1:30 p.m.

Adjourn



**7. Telephone number:** (    )

**Fax number** (    )

**8. E-mail address:**                      @

**9. The letters need to be addressed to:**

– **APPENDIX C** –

## **ORIGINS OF LEGISLATION**

The original idea for a bill can come from a number of sources- a legislator, the Governor, a special interest group, and individual citizen, or even a class of fourth graders. Any member of the Senate or House may introduce bills. Prior to their introduction, bills are "drafted" by the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) and then reviewed by the LSC to assure proper style and language.

## **THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

### **The Three Readings**

Under the Ohio Constitution, each piece of legislation must be given three separate readings, or "considerations" on three separate days. This can be bypassed if there is agreement by a two-thirds majority of the members of the chamber.

### **Introduction and The First Consideration**

Each bill to be considered is introduced in the chamber clerk's office where it is given a number. It is then read on the floor by title only for its first consideration. The reading of these bills takes place toward the end of the voting session, or during "skeleton" (nonvoting) sessions.

### **Reference- The Second Consideration**

After its introduction and first consideration, the bill goes to the Reference Committee, which reviews the legislation. In Reference Committee, the bill may or may not be assigned to a standing committee for hearings. The Reference Committee report is then read during session and this constitutes the second consideration of the legislation.

### **Committee Hearings**

One of the first hurdles a bill faces is that of the committee chairperson, who decides which bills will be heard and when. Some bills never receive consideration, while others are the subjects of a number of hearings before any committee action is taken. The legislation can be considered as introduced, or it can be amended in committee. If the bill has been substantively amended (and there is enough time), the LSC will draft a substitute bill for consideration. If a bill does not receive enough votes in committee to be recommended for passage it is essentially "killed".

Committee hearings are open to the public, and are where valuable testimony by state officials, lobbyists, and individual citizens is presented. Usually there are at least three hearings held before a bill is recommended for passage.

- Bill's sponsor presents the effect of the bill and why he or she introduced it.
- Proponent testimony from those that support the legislation.
- Opponent testimony from those that oppose the legislation.

Depending on various factors, including the complexity of the bill and the current political climate, the bill may be voted on in the third hearing, or held while more hearings are planned. A bill that is recommended for passage by a majority of the standing committee members is then sent to the Rules Committee.

– APPENDIX C –

### **Sub Committees**

Often, complex bills are assigned to a subcommittee, whose charge is to seriously study the proposal and report back to the full committee when an agreement on the bill has been reached.

The subcommittee also serves another purpose: a bill can be assigned there with the understanding that the subcommittees will take no action. This is often used as a method of killing unpopular or politically suspect legislation without exposing committee members to charges of failure to act on an issue.

### **The Rules Committee**

In both the House and Senate, the Rules Committee acts as a calendar committee and designates which bills shall be considered for passage and on what date. It is at this point that a bill can be virtually "bottled up", that is, if the members of the committee do not want the bill to be considered for a floor vote, they can simply keep it in the rules committee indefinitely.

### **The Floor Vote: Third Consideration**

If the Rules Committee schedules a bill on the calendar, the bill will be called up for consideration for debate on the floor on the designated date. This is the bill's third consideration. At this time, bills may be further amended on the floor and finally voted upon by the membership. A majority vote of each chamber is required to pass the bill. After passage here, the bill is sent to the other chamber to repeat the hearing process.

### **Concurrence**

In most instances, legislation passed in one chamber will be in a different form when it completes the legislative process in the other chamber. When this happens, the legislation must return to the first chamber for consideration of the amendments, referred to as "concurrence". If the motion to concur is rejected, then the bill goes to a Conference Committee.

### **Conference Committee**

The Conference Committee usually consists of three members from each chamber, with the Chair going to a member of the chamber where the bill originated; in most cases, this

is the original sponsor of the legislation. The Conference Committee debates only the areas of difference in the proposed legislation.

### **An Act**

After a bill has been passed by the General Assembly, it is enrolled in act form, signed by the presiding officers of both chambers, and presented to the Governor for their consideration. The Governor has three options at this point.

- Approval of the act with his signature.
- Veto of the act.
- Decline to take any action at all.

If the Governor takes the last option, the act will automatically become a law ten days after its receipt.

If the governor vetoes the act, he sends it back to the chamber of origin with his veto message. If three-fifths of the members of each chamber (in the 123rd General Assembly, sixty Representatives and twenty Senators) vote to pass the act "notwithstanding the objections of the Governor," it becomes law in the same manner as is the Governor had originally approved it.

After the Governor signs the act, it is enrolled and filed with the Secretary of State. The effective date is normally ninety days from the date that it is filed with the Secretary of State, though appropriation measures normally become effective the day they are filed. An act may also provide for an effective date later than ninety days after the filing.

## **– APPENDIX C – LEGISLATIVE JARGON**

### **Adjournment:**

1. Conclusion of the business of the chamber or committee.
2. A lengthy period of time that the chamber does not meet for a voting session, such as summer adjournment.

**Am HB:** Amended House Bill. This title is used when the bill has been reported out of committee with amendments added but scheduled for a floor vote.

**Am SB:** Amended Senate Bill. This title is used when the bill has been reported out of committee with amendments added but scheduled for a floor vote.

**Am Sub HB:** Amended Substitute House Bill. A substitute bill that has been reported out of committee with amendments added but scheduled for a floor vote.

**Am Sub. SB:** Amended Substitute Senate Bill. A substitute bill that has been reported out of committee with amendments added but scheduled for a floor vote.

**Amendments:** Revisions or additions proposed or made to a bill.

- Biennium:** 1. A two-year period, i.e. the duration of a session of the General Assembly, beginning in January of odd-numbered years.  
2. The duration of each state budget or state fiscal year (SFY) beginning on July 1 of each odd-numbered year.

**Bill:** A piece of proposed law submitted for consideration by the chambers of the General Assembly and presented to the Governor before becoming part of the Ohio Revised Code.

- Caucus:** 1. A groups of legislators with common interests or purpose, i.e. the Democratic Caucus, etc.  
2. A meeting of a political party to decide party policy or to establish a party position on a particular bill.

**Chamber:** Either of the two bodies of the General Assembly. Also refers to the physical meetings area of the House and Senate.

**Clerk (of the House or Senate):**

The appointed official who maintains the official record of the proceedings of the chamber.

**Conference Committee:**

A committee of members from each chamber created to resolve differences in legislation passed in different forms by each chamber.

**Emergency clause:**

Elimination of the referendum option in a bill that declares that legislation will become effective immediately upon enrollment with the Secretary of State.

**Engrossment:** The act of preparing a true copy of the bill with all its amendments.

**Enrolled Bill:** A final engrossment, which, when signed by the presiding officers, represents the end product of the legislative process.

**Fiscal Year (FY):**

Calendar period used for government accounting purposes that begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the next year. The fiscal year is named for the year in which it ends.

**Floor Leader:** A member of party caucus, both majority and minority, chosen to direct the party's action on the floor of that chamber.

**General Assembly:**

The legislative branch of government consisting of two chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

**Grandfather Clause:**

A clause in a bill affecting certain activity which exempts those already engaged in the practice of that activity before the legislation was passed.

**Hearing:** Process at which testimony is given before a committee pertaining to specific bills.

**In Committee:** The location reference of a bill after its assignment to a standing committee by the Reference Committee.

**In Session:** The formal time period when either the House or the Senate is meeting to hold votes.

**Journal:** The printed copy of the previous day's minutes.

**Lame Duck Session:**

The session held after the November election for seats of the General Assembly but before the General Assembly ends.

**Legislative Budget Office (LBO):**

Nonpartisan organization that provides technical assistance at the request of the legislature on issues involving the state budget, analysis of the monetary costs of legislation, and other financial information.

**Legislative Service Commission (LSC):**

Nonpartisan organization employed by the General Assembly to provide technical assistance to legislators, including the drafting of bills, analysis of legislation, and research.

**Lobbyist:** An advocate of the position of a special interest group.

**Ohio Revised Code (ORC):**

Contains all the laws passed by the General Assembly. Sometimes abbreviated to RC (Revised Code). Title 9 refers to the ORC Chapters beginning with a 900 number, and contains Ohio agricultural law.

**President of the Senate:**

Presiding officer of the Senate whom is elected from the Senate Majority Party by its members.

**President Pro Tempore:**

Serves as President of the Senate in the case of the President's absence or impeachment. Chosen from the Senate by the members.

**Recess:** A halt in the proceedings of a chamber; can also refer to a pause in a floor session or committee.

**Reported Out of Committee:**

Refers to the action of a standing committee that has approved a bill for submission to the rules committee with a recommendation for approval by the full chamber.

**Reference Committee:**

Committee responsible for routing bills to the standing committees and subcommittees. In the Senate, it is referred to as the Reference and Oversight committee, and occasionally is the primary committee for a piece of legislation.

**Resolution:** A formal expression of the opinions or wishes of the General Assembly. The types include:

- HR (House Resolution) and SR (Senate Resolution):

These are simple congratulatory pieces, often related to golden or silver anniversaries being reached by constituents. These do not require concurrence by both chambers.

- HCR (House Concurrent Resolution) and SCR (Senate Concurrent Resolution):

These pieces usually ask Congress to take action on an issue. These require concurrence by both chambers.

- HJR (House Joint Resolution) and SJR (Senate Joint Resolution):

These pieces are amendments to the Ohio Constitution. These require concurrence by both chambers, and are then presented as ballot issues.

**Rules Committee:**

Selects those bills to be placed on the calendar for floor debate on any given legislative day.

**Sine Die:** Literally without a day. Refers to adjournment of the General Assembly at the end of its term.

**Skeleton Session:**

A nonvoting session, used for the first reading of legislation and other parliamentary matters.

**Speaker of the House:**

The presiding officer of the House of Representatives. Elected by the membership from the majority party.

**Speaker Pro Tempore:**

Presides over the House in the absence of the Speaker. Elected by the membership from the majority party.

**Special Session:**

An extraordinary meeting of the legislature convened by the Governor for special purposes.

**Sponsor:** The member of the General Assembly who has introduced a particular bill for consideration. Members who add their names later to express strong support of the legislation are co-sponsors.

**Vehicle:** The bills selected by the leadership to deal with a certain issue when two or more bills have been introduced on the subject.

**Whip:** A member of the party caucus who is chosen by the party to maintain party discipline; there is both a majority whip and minority whip in each chamber.