SPEAK OUT

February 2009

Climate Change
Windfall for Agriculture?

Objectives

- To increase member awareness about opportunities for agriculture to positively impact climate change.
- To gather feedback from council members regarding their willingness to participate in greenhouse gas reduction efforts.
- To encourage discussion about the role Ohio Farm Bureau should play in the development of national and state climate change policy.

Current Farm Bureau Policy: (As adopted by voting delegates at the OFBF annual meeting, December 2008). The following policies deal with climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy **419**

Ohio Farm Bureau should provide leadership in the development of a comprehensive state energy policy that incorporates the use of clean coal technology, nuclear and alternative fuels such as wind, biofuels, methane, solid waste, geothermal, hydroelectric, hydrogen, and solar, and funding for technology and research to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign fossil fuels.

Climate Change **419.4**

Ohio agricultural and silvicultural industries recognize that they have an important role to play in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emission. If a state climate change policy is developed, it should incorporate the following principles:

1. Flexible market-based solutions such as soil carbon sequestration and carbon credit trading;
2. Does not put Ohio agriculture and silviculture at an economic disadvantage;
3. Does not increase the costs of production inputs such as fuel, fertilizers or agricultural chemicals;
4. Based on sound science;
5. Consensus based which considers the viewpoints and concerns of all stakeholders;
6. Participatory process involving multiple stakeholder representatives.

Conservation and Market-Based Incentives **421.33**

We support the development of market-based incentives, such as pollution permit trading as an alternative to government prescriptions.

We believe that pollution permit trading is a viable approach to implement the requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act and Federal Clean Air Act.

We support further education of producers regarding the carbon credit program.

Introduction

The climate of the Earth has undergone many changes during the planet's history, with events ranging from ice ages to long periods of warmth. Natural factors such as volcanic eruptions, changes in the Earth's orbit, and the amount of energy released from the sun have all played a role in these historical changes. Over the last century the concentration of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere has markedly increased. Scientists believe that the burning of fossil fuels and cutting of forests have led to this increase.

As a natural part of the Earth's atmosphere, greenhouse gasses, such as carbon dioxide, trap heat in the same way that glass does in a greenhouse. Without them, the Earth would be too cold for agriculture as we know it. As the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases increase, the Earth's temperature also increases. Long-term records indicate the average surface temperature of the Earth has increased by about 1.5º F since 1900. Additionally, changes have been observed in rainfall patterns (heavy rainfall events have become more frequent), the amount of snow and ice cover has declined and the sea level has risen.

As with any field of scientific study, there are uncertainties associated with the science of climate change. Data indicate the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are increasing and that human actions play a role. Mathematical models predict increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases will change the planet's climate. Questions remain about how much warming will occur, how fast it will occur, and how the warming will affect precipitation patterns and storms.

Background

Momentum is building and it is believed that legislation will soon be drafted in Washington, D.C. seeking to address global climate change through the reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases. Agriculture is poised to play a unique role in the climate change policy debate. The industry must be front and center during the policymaking discussions to make sure that any proposed climate change legislation will not negatively impact production agriculture. If agriculture is not engaged, climate change policy could impact producers by raising fuel, fertilizer and energy costs to the point where it would no longer be economical to farm. Climate change policy discussions must ensure the long-term viability of the agricultural industry and the ability to compete in world markets.

Role of Agriculture in Climate Change

It is estimated that agricultural activities contribute approximately 8 percent of the annual greenhouse gas emissions taking place in the United States. It is also estimated that agriculture has the potential to remove almost 20 percent of the total annual U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Because agriculture has the ability to provide carbon offsets (store carbon in the

soil, produce and use biofuels, capture and burn methane) at a rate that is two to three times greater than its emissions, climate change policies can provide many opportunities for agricultural producers.

The use of renewable bio-based resources as low-carbon energy sources offers the opportunity for agriculture to address climate change in a profitable way. Many agricultural producers have voluntarily incorporated soil conservation and other management practices that increase the amount of carbon stored in the soil. Storing, or sequestering, carbon in soil and in trees helps reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Production practices that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions offer many additional economic and environmental benefits. Reducing the number of field operations used to grow crops saves money, time and labor. Management practices that increase the amount of carbon in the soil also help to reduce soil erosion and improve soil quality.

Many farmers have voluntarily adopted carbon reduction and sequestration practices. They should be recognized and rewarded for their good action, not penalized.

Climate Change Policy Options

Policy discussions have primarily focused on legislation leading to the establishment of a cap and trade program whereby a limit on greenhouse gas emissions is established, with an accompanying allocation/permitting program, and emission credits are bought and sold through a market-based trading program. Creation of a cap and trade program is one of a host of policy options available to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Other viable options to consider include:

- voluntary actions and markets that encourage private and public sectors to curb greenhouse gas emissions through expanded technical assistance, education and information sharing
- incentive based-programs that help the private and public sector to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets through cash payments (similar to existing agricultural conservation programs)
- regulations that mandate the attainment of greenhouse gas emission reduction targets (vehicle fuel efficiency and emission levels, energy efficient (Energy Star) appliances, building codes incorporating energy conservation components)
- creation of a tax based on the carbon content of fuel or on the amount of carbon emission from burning fossil fuels (promotes energy efficiency, fuel switching and renewable fuels).

Market-Based Solutions

Agricultural producers know the benefits of implementing conservation practices in their operations - better soil, cleaner water and greater profits. What if you could earn more for these same conservation practices? It is possible with a market-based approach designed to improve environmental quality that assigns economic value to the benefits generated by implementing conservation practices.

A developing carbon credit market to control greenhouse gases is making it possible for farmers to register and sell carbon credits from agricultural practices. Credits are being traded by the Chicago

Climate Exchange, the only emissions reduction and trading system for all six greenhouse gases and the only operational cap and trade system in North America.

AgraGate Climate Credits Corporation was created to expand the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Carbon Credit Aggregation Program. With more than 1 million acres aggregated from American farmers, ranchers and private forest owners in 16 states, AgraGate is the nation's leading supplier of carbon credit aggregation services to agriculture.

Carbon credits can be obtained by storing or "sequestering" carbon in soil and plant material effectively removing carbon from the air. Carbon can be stored through no-till planting, restoring wetlands, converting cropland to permanent grass or trees, planting conservation buffers and using cover crops.

Now it is your opportunity to tell Ohio Farm Bureau the direction it should be moving as the organization engages in the ongoing climate change policy discussions. It is important you share your thoughts on this timely but controversial topic.

Questions:

1) What type of greenhouse gas reduction program would be the most appropriate and beneficial for Ohio agriculture? Market-Based? Regulatory? Cap and Trade? Carbon Tax? Other?

2) Did you know that opportunities existed in Ohio for farmers to participate in carbon trading programs to address environmental quality concerns? Yes? No? If "Yes," where did you learn about it?

3) If given the opportunity, would you be willing to install new conservation practices to become eligible to enter into a multi-year (three to five year) carbon credit trading contract? Why or why not?

March Topic: Policy Development

Information Sources:

- Dr. Larry Antosch, OFBF director of policy development and environmental research
- Adam Sharp, OFBF senior director legislative and regulatory policy
- Dale Arnold, OFBF director of energy policy
- Pew Center on Global Climate Change, Web site www.pewclimate.org/
- Chicago Climate Exchange, Web site www.chicagoclimatex.com/
- AgraGate Climate Credits Corporation, Web site www.agragate.com/default.aspx

CONNECTIONS

COMPARE YOUR RESPONSES

The following is a tabulation of the responses to the October Speakout Guide on the issue of *Election Preview*. Samplings of some of the comments received are also included.

1. **Do you believe rural voters will make the difference again this year in choosing our next President?**

Answers to this question were split pretty evenly between the yes and no responses.

- Too many new young urban voters
- Our voters (rural) will make a difference
- The inner cities will make the difference this time
- Yes, we may be a small number and speak softly but we do vote

2. **What are the most important agricultural issues facing Ohio voters this year?**

Ballot issues 2 and 3 came up often in responses. Also more broadly, many councils thought the economy and input costs for farmers were critical issues.

3. **How do you feel about the presidential candidates positions on agricultural issues?**

Many councils responded that neither candidate had a very strong agriculture platform.

- Mr. Obama seems to generalize everything, Mr. McCain doesn't support the farm programs
- We don't know where they stand
- We don't think agriculture is important to either of them

4. **Are any members of your council currently volunteering for a candidate's campaign for President, Congress or Statehouse?**

Very few council members shared that they were actively volunteering for a candidate or campaign.

PUBLIC POLICY

Beth Vanderkooi has joined the department as director of state policy. She will help Ohio Farm Bureau represent its members at the Ohio Statehouse and with others in state government.

Vanderkooi has spent the past six years as a legislative aide in the office of State Senator Tim Grendell, R-Chesterland, and also during his time as a state representative. She has worked on a number of issues important to Farm Bureau members, including eminent domain and private property rights. She was raised on a small farm in Bellville and holds a bachelor's degree as an Ashbrook Scholar from Ashland University, where she studied political science, economics and international studies.

COMMUNICATIONS

The new-look and much improved OFBF Web site, ofbf.org, is scheduled to launch soon. The interactive site will be more user-friendly and will contain the latest news, events and involvement opportunities. The latest media, including audio and video podcasts will be featured. Personalized Web accounts will also direct members to their local Farm Bureau contact information, including county Web pages.

The new site will also interact with Farm Bureau's presence on several Web-based social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, where members and other agricultural enthusiasts can form online connections and communities to discuss agricultural issues and spread Farm Bureau's mission and good work to new audiences.

Staff will educate and train county leaders and members as new features are introduced and utilized.

If you have questions regarding the launch of our improved Web presence, contact:
Lynn Snyder -- 614-246-8232, lsnyder@ofbf.org
Dan Toland -- 614-246-8233, dtoland@ofbf.org

ORGANIZATION

Scholarships Available
The Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation (Foundation) is again offering assistance to interested students through its family of scholarship programs. These include the *Darwin Bryan Scholarship Program,* (DBS) the *Women's Leadership in Agriculture Scholarship Program* (WLASP) and the new *Foundation Scholar* (FS) program.

Collectively, these Foundation scholarship programs will award at least 10 scholarships, each featuring a minimum $1000 award. The application deadline for all scholarship programs is Monday, March 2, 2009.

Additional information and application materials can be found on the OFBF and Foundation Web sites at http://ofbf.org/page/RRIR-6NAL4T/. (www.ofbf.org)

HONEYBAKED WINNER

Boots and Saddles Advisory Council
Crawford County

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Discussion Leader's Notes
January 2009

TIPS FOR LEADING THIS MONTH'S DISCUSSION

- There are many diverse opinions out there regarding climate change. It's important that your council members feel comfortable expressing their opinion.
- Ohio Farm Bureau delegates passed climate change policy at the 2008 Annual Meeting. Encourage members to read and discuss this policy and share their thoughts.
- Provide feedback regarding potential policy that Farm Bureau may want to support or oppose regarding climate change and how it could impact businesses and individuals.

CONNECTIONS

Communications
New OFBF Web site scheduled to launch in mid February.

Public Policy
Beth Vanderkooi has joined the department.

Organization
Scholarships are now available for interested students.

HONEYBAKED HAM WINNER

Boots and Saddles Advisory Council
Crawford County

FUN SHEET

SUBMITTED BY: TRI TOWNSHIP NEIGHBORS FARM COUNCIL
MERCER COUNTY

Farm Implements

Clue	Answers
1. To trudge through	1. Plow
2. A computer component	2. Disc
3. To plunder	3. Harrow
4. Type of wart	4. Planter
5. A dental instrument	5. Drill
6. Mix together	6. Combine
7. To disrobe-cultivator	7. Strip tiller
8. A bondsman	8. Baler
9. Radio Flyer	9. Wagon
10. Bearded crocodile	10. Harrogator
11. Eating utensil	11. Fork
12. Slang greeting – Shady character	12. Hay rake