

OHIO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

2012 STATE POLICIES

**Resolutions on State Issues Adopted by the Voting
Delegates of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
93rd Annual Meeting**

December 2011

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SECTION 1: GOVERNANCE, ENERGY & LABOR

SECTION 1: GOVERNANCE, ENERGY & LABOR

FARM BUREAU

Ohio Farm Bureau

101

The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation is an independent, voluntary organization of Ohio farmers and rural people who are members of member Farm Bureaus. Basic democratic principles are used throughout to govern the organization. Farm Bureau fosters responsible citizenship and is proud to be respected as an opinion leader throughout rural and urban Ohio.

The farm family is the backbone of the organization and the organization is strong because of the active support and involvement of its membership. The membership involves all races, ages, sexes, commodities, religious beliefs, and political interests.

We will continue to assist member Farm Bureaus in expanding their total programs as they seek solutions to local problems important to farmers and rural Ohio. We encourage counties to maximize their effort in getting more farmers to join the organization. We encourage counties to conduct outreach and education for associate members so that they can better understand Farm Bureau and agriculture. We encourage Farm Bureau members to be more knowledgeable of issues, be more involved in their county and state organization and be advocates for agriculture.

We support the *Our Ohio* brand and encourage its further development by Farm Bureau and its members as a means to better connect with consumers and associate members. We will continue to develop, implement, create and support programs that seek to improve the public perception and image of all segments of production agriculture. We will continue to support mechanisms that promote and utilize *Our Ohio* initiatives as a more prominent membership marketing tool.

We encourage the expanded use of social media as an effective communications tool to achieve our mission.

The amount of dues varies from county to county. New members should be accepted in their county of residence, with the exception that absentee landowners might be accepted in the county of their farm location.

By affiliating with Farm Bureaus in 49 other states and Puerto Rico in the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) we are able to present a strong and united approach to the problems facing rural America.

We support funding and programs conducted by the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation, the Animals for Life Foundation and the Ohio Center on Agricultural Law.

Leadership Development

102

Ohio Farm Bureau is committed to the long-term personal and professional leadership development of its members, youth and young agricultural professionals. By creating, facilitating and encouraging leadership programs within Ohio Farm Bureau and cooperating with allied organizations, we will develop strong leaders for our organization, community and agricultural industry.

1 The Ohio Farm Bureau Youth Program should be encouraged, supported and
2 expanded. We should explore youth leadership development opportunities within the
3 Ohio Farm Bureau and with like-minded groups outside the organization.

4
5 **Farmer and Consumer Partnership** **103**

6 We will continue to work to better inform consumers about all aspects of agriculture.
7 We understand that consumers need to be better connected to all aspects of food, fiber
8 and fuel production, from the farm level on to the grocery store, restaurant, farm market
9 or other point of sale. At the same time, we recognize that to forge a partnership means to
10 be good listeners as well. We call on all of Farm Bureau to better understand the
11 consumer perspective and adopt a customer service mindset as a step toward forging a
12 partnership.

13 We support ongoing efforts to engage the public about the importance of all animals
14 in society and the benefits from this relationship between people and animals that are
15 essential to the health and well-being of both.

16
17 **Nationwide** **104**

18 We are proud of the fact that Nationwide was founded by Farm Bureau and remains
19 an important part of our family. We still believe the principles of a mutual company
20 must consider the needs and wants of its policyholders as part of its corporate
21 management.

22 We encourage continued effectiveness as partners by promoting the aims and services
23 of our organizations among our employees, our members, our policyholders and, when
24 appropriate, the Ohio public. Emphasis should continue in providing channels for
25 communication between various segments of our organizations to assure maximum
26 understanding of organizational ties.

27 We support Nationwide's effort to be the premier agricultural insurer in the country.
28 We urge them to take an innovative and comprehensive approach that addresses the risk
29 management needs of a changing agricultural industry.

30 We urge Ohio Farm Bureau and Nationwide to clarify the use of farm vehicles used
31 in custom farming operations.

32 We recommend that our members avail themselves of the full line of products offered
33 by Nationwide. In order to facilitate our members' use of these services, we recommend
34 Nationwide continue its policy of making agents available in all 88 counties.

35 We encourage Nationwide to utilize the experience and knowledge of their agents in
36 setting policy and procedures with the goal of benefiting both Nationwide and its
37 policyholders.

38 Recognizing the significance of Farm Bureau members' rates for automobile and
39 truck insurance, we encourage member Farm Bureaus to conduct at least one program per
40 year on vehicular safety.

41 We in Farm Bureau support continuing territorial rating in pricing insurance
42 premiums.

43
44 **Medical Mutual of Ohio** **105**

45 Ohio Farm Bureau should continue to work with Medical Mutual of Ohio to develop
46 quality and affordable health insurance solutions for farmers and business owners.

AGRICULTURE

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Ohio Agriculture 111

We support increased opportunities for agriculture to continue to grow as Ohio’s number one industry. We are concerned about economic and quality of life issues in all rural communities. Therefore, we will support reasonable efforts and needed research to address local issues including, but not limited to, water quantity and quality, air quality, physical, social, communication, energy and utility infrastructure, and the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMP’s) pertaining to these issues. Identifying needed research, compiling and distributing research data, and funding of these activities should be emphasized to enhance our ability to address the concerns and questions of farmers and neighbors.

We recognize the increasing need to not only address questions that consumers may have about agriculture, but also actively seek and consider the consumer perspective in all aspects of agricultural production and processing. It is critical that we engage our customers in a dialog to better understand the customer’s perspective in all that we do.

The Governor, his cabinet and legislators should recognize and promote agriculture and agricultural jobs as an economic development tool for Ohio including an agricultural component in JobsOhio at all levels. Greater emphasis should be placed on promoting the agricultural industry domestically and internationally.

We support a review of all state economic development activities to ensure consistent funding, support and project efficiency for agriculture and rural communities.

We will work with the administration to develop a positive business climate in Ohio.

Ohio Department of Agriculture 112

We will continue to work for appropriate funding for the Ohio Department of Agriculture and maintain the importance of the department in its role in the health and safety of all Ohioans.

The position of Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture should be maintained as a Governor’s cabinet level position and the agency should be operated as a stand-alone part of state government, focusing on issues pertaining to food, fiber and fuel, production/safety, environmental quality and natural resource (soil and water) conservation.

ODA regulatory efforts for public health and safety should be a budgeted expense of ODA and funded by the general fund.

All fees assessed for programs and services provided by the agency should be at a reasonable cost and retained within the department.

Farm Service Agency 113

We support adequate staffing of all county Farm Service Agency offices. Staffing levels should be established based on the total workload of each local office and we recognize that this could result in county office consolidation. County committees should be consulted on any proposed office change.

We support a viable county committee system as an integral part of administering Farm Service Agency programs and encourage an expanded role for this valuable source of local input.

1 The Farm Service Agency should have all county offices follow the same procedures
2 for consistency and accept reports from other counties and agencies.

3
4 **Agricultural Financing** **114**

5 We support the farmer-owned and controlled Farm Credit System and encourage our
6 members to utilize it.

7 We support expansion of Ag-LINK; the State of Ohio Linked Deposit Program
8 designed to serve agriculture. The program should be enhanced by increasing the per
9 applicant loan application limit above its current level of \$100,000.

10 We encourage potential borrowers as well as lending institutions to explore and use
11 Farmer Mac programs for purchases of agricultural real estate and/or farm homes.

12 We support the establishment of credit and/or venture capital for newly developed
13 farmer-sponsored marketing programs.

14 We support statewide line item funding for Resource Conservation and Development
15 Councils for the state budget.

16 We support the state of Ohio expanding participation of non-depository Farm Credit
17 Services beyond Ag-LINK to include all state sponsored lending programs designed to
18 support farming and agribusiness.

19
20 **Cooperatives** **115**

21 We encourage the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and member Farm Bureaus to
22 cultivate a good relationship with all cooperatives. We encourage cooperatives to seek
23 ways to meet the changing needs of their members. We support increased efforts to
24 educate farmers and consumers about the benefits of cooperative membership, leadership
25 development and patronage.

26
27 **ELECTIONS**

28
29 **Term Limits** **121**

30 We support extending the term limit for state legislators to 12 years.

31 We support extending the term for a state representative from two years to four years.

32
33 **Political Campaigns** **122**

34 We support the enforcement of existing campaign finance laws and encourage the
35 examination of further campaign finance reform.

36 We support legislation to prohibit the solicitation of contributions at the time of
37 gathering signatures for an initiative petition.

38 We oppose contributions to political campaigns from foreign interests.

39 We encourage political candidates to campaign on the issues and avoid negative
40 campaigning.

41 We support full disclosure of all campaign contributions.

42
43 **Political Education** **123**

44 Farmers should become better informed and seek elected office or become actively
45 involved in politics and government at the local, state, and national levels.

1 Many candidates for public office and many issues on the ballot are deserving of
2 farmers’ financial support. The Agriculture for Good Government Political Action
3 Committee (AGGPAC) must rely on individual members for contributions since
4 organization funds cannot legally be used. More funds should be generated to support or
5 oppose issues on the ballot and to make contributions to deserving candidates who
6 support Farm Bureau policy.

7 The Ohio Farm Bureau should:

- 8 1. Operate AGGPAC on a bi-partisan basis;
- 9 2. Encourage the members to participate as individuals in political party activities
10 and serve in various capacities of the political party structure. More farmer
11 involvement in our political parties is seriously needed to strengthen and keep the
12 parties responsive to the best interest of agriculture and rural communities;
- 13 3. Provide convenient opportunities for members to voluntarily contribute to
14 AGGPAC;
- 15 4. Encourage member Farm Bureaus to promote or provide activities which inform
16 members of political issues, candidates, and public officials and to surface viable
17 candidates to run for office;
- 18 5. Provide profiles of statewide candidates and issues;
- 19 6. Take a more aggressive role in surfacing and assisting candidates that are friendly
20 to agriculture because of the effects of term limits; and
- 21 7. Encourage Farm Bureau members to take advantage of the credit against state
22 income tax for contributions to candidates for state political office.

23
24 **Judicial Elections** **124**

25 All judges should be elected in a general election, and only be appointed to fill the
26 term if a current judge cannot fulfill his/her duties.

27 The role of the court is to interpret the law and Constitution(s), rather than making
28 new law via decisions.

29
30 **Special Elections** **125**

31 We oppose all special elections, except those necessary to fill office vacancies.

32
33 **Student Voting** **126**

34 Students desiring to vote should be required to vote in their home community. The
35 person designated as a student should not be permitted to register to vote in the college
36 location unless he/she is a permanent resident.

37
38 **Help America Vote Act** **127**

39 The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) provides regulations and finances to change the
40 way Ohio votes. Administration of funds should not adversely affect local government
41 finances. Local governments and their respective Boards of Elections should have the
42 authority to choose election equipment and program vendors.

43
44 **Right of Recall** **128**

45 We support the right of recall for state, county and township officials.

1 **Initiative and Referendum** **129**

2 We encourage a comprehensive review of initiative and referendum provisions in
3 Ohio law.

4
5 **ENERGY**

6
7 **Energy** **141**

8 Ohio Farm Bureau should provide leadership in the on-going development of a
9 comprehensive state energy policy that incorporates the use of coal, nuclear, natural gas,
10 petroleum and competitive renewable technologies. These renewable technologies
11 include, but are not limited to wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydroelectric, and fuel
12 cells.

13 We support utilization of methane as a renewable fuel when it is captured from
14 processes using anaerobic digestion, biomass reaction and/or collection from landfills and
15 abandoned coal mines.

16 We support developing our own natural resources to reduce the dependence on
17 foreign fossil fuels.

18 We support 25 percent of Ohio's energy needs being met through the use of clean
19 coal, advanced nuclear and renewable energy sources by 2025.

20 We support legislation permitting tax credits, grants and other incentives to develop
21 renewable energy sources.

22 We support the development of public policies which encourage sustainable and
23 renewable energy production, especially for small and community scale, decentralized
24 situations.

25 We support recognition of on-farm energy production as an agricultural product.

26 We support the recognition and utilization of coal as an economical and readily
27 accessible source for current electrical generation needs, as well as research and
28 development in clean coal technologies to provide for future energy requirements.

29 We support the requirement to show a need for utility scale energy generation
30 projects.

31 We encourage the development of additional connections between utility and
32 infrastructure and transmission pipelines that could provide Ohio natural gas consumers
33 direct access to lower cost gas supplies.

34 We encourage the utilization of installed pipelines that can be retrofitted to transport
35 natural gas supplies. These pipelines can be used to bring more natural gas into
36 communities needing these resources. Ohio Farm Bureau should work with the Federal
37 Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio,
38 (PUCO), incumbent utilities, service providers, pipeline companies, and interested
39 community leaders to establish these systems.

40 We support net metering prices paid by utilities for on-site generation to reflect the
41 cost of generation, value of renewable energy and value of local energy production.

42 We encourage landowners to explore creating negotiation groups advised by legal
43 counsel, thereby leveraging aggregate acreage, group interest and bargaining positions
44 when dealing with energy developers.

Biofuels**142**

We support the research, development and utilization of agricultural products to create both solid and liquid biofuels.

We encourage research regarding cellulosic ethanol production utilizing woody biomass, grasses, compost and other hydrocarbon-rich agricultural and food processing byproducts and/or residues.

We encourage expansion of liquid biofuels for use in the consumer market, as well as promotion of these energy sources as they enhance efforts for a cleaner environment and enhanced national security.

We support creation and use of solid biofuels to help Ohio-based utilities, energy service providers and industrial energy consumers combine the use of renewable resources with investments in clean coal and other advanced energy technologies.

We support construction and/or expansion of solid and liquid biofuel production facilities in Ohio. We encourage utilization of Ohio's expedited permitting process for advanced and renewable liquid fuel plants to include solid biofuel processing facilities.

We encourage the use of biofuels, at the highest percentage blend economically feasible, in all vehicles as distribution systems improve. We urge each Farm Bureau member to actively promote the use and marketing of ethanol enhanced gasoline and soy-biodiesel and continue support of an aggressive education campaign to promote the benefits of ethanol-blended gasoline and the differences between ethanol and methanol.

We urge the State of Ohio to give preference to bio-based fuels in any alternative fuels program.

We support the use of ethanol in coal desulfurization.

We support aggressive expansion of the Ohio Department of Development's biofuel utilization program to provide more resources helping fuel distributors and local retail outlets install more infrastructure and pumps to distribute biofuels and other renewable and/or alternative forms of energy to the public.

We encourage further research and development of uses of the by-products of biofuel production.

We encourage state and local government agencies to use alternative fuels and to purchase biofuel compliant vehicles.

Wind and Solar**143**

We support Ohio Power Siting Board Rules and regulations encouraging reasonable, landowner friendly, uniform statewide regulations and guidelines pertaining to the siting, placement, construction and operation of utility-scale wind and solar farms. These rules should include:

1. A pre-application conference with local public officials that addresses the environmental compatibility and public need for a proposed facility;
2. An initial public meeting to advise affected persons of the upcoming project and to gather initial public input and concerns that are used by the applicant to aid in preparation of an application;
3. Continued developer education/outreach activities ensuring dialogue between the company and members of the community;

- 1 4. Establishment of an accessible local office by the developer, ensuring community
- 2 members have access to company representatives to discuss development issues
- 3 and possible concerns;
- 4 5. Creation of an application that evaluates economic, environmental, and aesthetic
- 5 impacts on the community as defined in the Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 4906,
- 6 and the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), Chapter 4906-1. The application is to be
- 7 posted as a matter of public record on the OPSB website, with electronic and
- 8 hard copies available at all public libraries in the county, the office of the county
- 9 Commissioners and through the township trustees in township within the project
- 10 area;
- 11 6. Scheduling of adjudicatory and local public hearings, enabling citizens, interest
- 12 groups, and governmental entities to present testimony and included in the case
- 13 as evidence.

14 We encourage continued research and development in wind generation technology
 15 and expansion of Ohio Department of Development efforts to help Ohio-based
 16 companies participate in supply chain programs to manufacture wind turbine parts.

17 We encourage increased cooperation between state and federal agencies in
 18 minimizing and/or preventing delays in approval and construction of wind turbine
 19 projects due to the concerns for migratory birds, bats or other wildlife.

20 We support education and outreach activities for local government leaders and
 21 community planners as they work to create county, municipal and township zoning
 22 ordinances supporting use of on-site wind turbine technology for farm, business and
 23 home use.

24
 25 **Methane** **144**

26 We support and promote the use of methane gas, generated or collected from
 27 anaerobic digesters, bioreactors, landfills and/or abandoned coal mines, as a renewable
 28 energy resource.

29
 30 **Oil and Gas Exploration/Leasing** **145**

31 OFBF supports:

- 32 1. Strengthening the ODNR Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management to
- 33 enforce all rules governing drilling, hydro fraction and related activities.
- 34 2. Collaborative efforts between ODNR, state agencies, energy service providers,
- 35 local government leaders and rural residents to inspect, repair, remediate and
- 36 restore on farm resources and public infrastructure impacted by drilling,
- 37 transportation, storage, and production activities.
- 38 3. State and federal governments creating additional financial resources for local
- 39 communities to address economic, logistic, social and service issues as large oil
- 40 and gas exploration projects get underway in many neighborhoods.
- 41 4. Strategies that balance conservation of farm and community resources with the
- 42 need to eliminate physical constraints and network interconnections required to
- 43 get new energy supplies to refineries and markets.
- 44 5. Preservation of current rules governing oil and gas exploration that protect soil
- 45 and water resources, as well as recognize implied covenants created through Ohio
- 46 court decisions that give landowners with lease agreements guaranteed provisions

1 to ensure repair, remediation and compensation on the impact of oil and gas
2 exploration on their property.

3
4 **On-Site Generation** **146**

5 We support incorporation of an option for on-site generation facilities using wind,
6 solar and/or other renewable energy technologies into construction plans for school and
7 local government facilities.

8 **LABOR**

9
10 **Labor Legislation** **151**

11 We support state legislation to protect the rights of workers, farmers, and consumers
12 during labor disputes.

13
14 **Migrant Housing** **152**

15 We support the clarification that migrant housing is exempt from local zoning
16 regulations.

17 We support working with the Ohio Department of Health to create an expedited
18 process ensuring timely migrant labor camp inspections with licenses being issued for
19 occupancy, better consistency of inspection process, and relief from unreasonable hot
20 water requirements.

21 We encourage the U.S. Department of Labor to approve the Ohio Department of
22 Health as the housing inspection agency for the H-2A program in Ohio.

23 We support the reinstatement of funding for the Ohio Migrant Labor Camp
24 Improvement Program, or the development of another cost sharing program to assist
25 migrant labor camp construction and improvements.

26
27 **Wage and Labor Standards** **153**

28 Ohio labor standards should coincide with federal standards.

29 We support the use of proper survey methodology to obtain “prevailing wages” (as
30 defined by the H2A program) for temporary worker programs as required by U.S. laws
31 and regulations and encourage member participation.

32 We support civil rights and equal employment opportunity enforcement, however, we
33 oppose any legislation that promotes the use of hiring and promotion quotas, allows
34 punitive damage awards, or places the burden on the employer to prove his innocence.

35 We encourage agricultural representation on Ohio Department of Job and Family
36 Services advisory committees concerning local employment issues.

37
38 **Prevailing Wage** **154**

39 We support the elimination of the state and federal prevailing wage (Davis Bacon)
40 laws.

41
42 **Unemployment Insurance** **155**

43 We support increasing the agricultural payroll threshold per calendar quarter to
44 \$50,000 to reflect wage inflation that has occurred since the enactment of agricultural
45 coverage and that it be indexed in the future to adjust for inflation. We also support
46 increasing the agricultural threshold coverage for multiple employees from the current

1 level of 10 or more persons during any portion of 20 or more weeks of the year to a level
 2 of 15 or more persons for any portion of 30 weeks of the year. We recommend a one-
 3 week waiting period before qualifying for benefits.

4 We will work to exempt wages of part-time farm laborers who are 18 years old and
 5 under, senior citizens, family members and full-time students from the requirements of
 6 the Ohio Unemployment Compensation Law.

7 We recommend that unemployment insurance not be paid to persons on strike, on
 8 voluntary leave, who are retired, or who refuse to work when work is available.

9 Unemployment insurance should not be extended to occasional domestic help or
 10 foreign workers in this country on foreign work permits.

11 We support retention of experience rating and preserving the state responsibility to
 12 determine eligibility and benefits.

13 We support the state law that would require minimum earnings of \$150 per qualifying
 14 week.

16 **Workers' Compensation** **156**

17 We support continued improvement of the Workers' Compensation program to
 18 eliminate inefficiencies, unfair claims, and excessive settlements.

19 Ohio Farm Bureau should work to have the Worker's Compensation program in Ohio
 20 handled by private insurers.

21 We support programs or proposals that will lead to reasonable Workers'
 22 Compensation rates for farmers and other agricultural related businesses. Workers'
 23 Compensation programs have provided valuable protection for farmers and other
 24 employers by meeting the needs of injured employees. An insurance fund should be
 25 allowed to provide coverage for any intentional tort liability exposure.

26 We oppose their increase in minimum fees.

27 We recommend that employers who hire less than \$5,000 of labor per year file and
 28 report Workers' Compensation premiums on an annual basis.

29 We support the Workers' Compensation Group Rating Program. The group should
 30 be entitled to any savings on premium that is fairly earned by the group.

31 We urge better administrative auditing and legislative efforts to protect the Workers'
 32 Compensation fund.

33 The definition of employees for the purpose of Ohio's Workers Compensation law
 34 should not be changed to exclude aliens or children.

36 **New Hire Reporting** **157**

37 We support the elimination of independent contractors in the definition of employees
 38 in Ohio's new hire reporting requirements.

40 **Workforce Development** **158**

41 We support enhanced research development and programming to meet the workforce
 42 development needs in Ohio agriculture and the advanced energy sector.

SECTION 2: QUALITY OF LIFE

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SECTION 2: QUALITY OF LIFE

EDUCATION

Agricultural Awareness 201

We support the Ohio Farm Bureau in their efforts to educate the public about agriculture and life on a farm, to include but not be limited to accurate agricultural news to offset misinformation that is presented by the media.

Agricultural, Public and Continuing Education 202

We encourage the adoption and promotion of nationally recognized best practices set forth for agricultural education programs. We recommend that all agricultural education programs be designed to address both educational performance standards and recognized industry standards.

We support:

1. Funding for agricultural education instruction to occur beyond the regular school day, week and year;
2. The development of agriscience based courses and the granting of science credit for such courses;
3. Comprehensive career technical planning that is designed to ensure access to agricultural education programs for all students, regardless of school of attendance, race, national origin, sex, religion, handicap, or age;
4. FFA as a personal and leadership development program;
5. Programs that assure farmers have access to adult agricultural education that provides financial management, record keeping, financial analysis instruction, and retirement and estate planning;
6. State funding to local schools for agricultural education and FFA;
7. Local educational systems which allow students to take college preparatory courses and agricultural education courses; and
8. Ongoing alignment of secondary agricultural education programs with related college programs that leads to articulated college credit and prepares students for high technology agricultural and agribusiness related careers.
9. Requiring one semester of life skills education which includes an agricultural education component prior to graduation.

To enhance “Ag in the Classroom”, we encourage all school teachers to participate in the “Food, Land and People” training program.

We recommend expansion of supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs and other experiential programs which encourage students to participate in out-of-school experiential learning activities that include internships, career research, job shadowing, job placement and entrepreneurial job activities. We encourage greater support of student out-of-school activities by industry and agriculture.

In view of accelerating technological and social changes, we support the expansion of adult training and retraining programs. We urge that federal and state programs be coordinated to make better use of existing facilities.

We encourage the Ohio Department of Education to retain the agriculture education leadership team that includes three agricultural education consultant positions and one

1 administrative position to assist the programming needs of the Agriculture Education
2 Program.

3

4 **Higher Education** **203**

5 We are concerned about the effect of inflation on our institutions of higher education
6 and urge our state funded universities to explore cost containment measures including
7 collaboration and consolidation. We urge the state to maintain the funding needed to
8 ensure a quality higher education program at all of our state supported institutions of
9 higher learning. Agriculture related continuing education programs should be offered at
10 the branch campuses and community and technical colleges.

11 To increase enrollment in post-secondary agriculture education, the agriculture
12 industry and Ohio’s agricultural schools and colleges should do more to inform youth of
13 the diverse and attractive career opportunities available in agriculture.

14 We oppose our state-funded universities making political or social statements through
15 their food purchasing practices.

16

17 **Public Education** **204**

18 Rural students should have the same opportunities and benefits offered to their urban
19 and suburban counterparts. Education programs should give breadth, quality and
20 maximum opportunity in education to our citizens.

21 We support:

- 22 1. Distance learning programs made possible by new technologies;
- 23 2. A coordinated effort among agricultural groups to expand the Ag in the
24 Classroom program;
- 25 3. Creating the network necessary to establish farm to school food programs
26 throughout Ohio;
- 27 4. Family and Consumer Science courses including personal money management at
28 our elementary, middle and high schools;
- 29 5. The integration of agriculture and related industry in STEM (science, technology,
30 engineering and math) curriculum.
- 31 6. Studies to examine the impact of extending the school year.
- 32 7. A form of physical activity during each school day.

33 We oppose establishment by law of a minimum school district population.

34 We encourage School districts to accept an open enrollment policy.

35 We urge all organizations to work together where possible in developing positive
36 agricultural/environmental literacy programs for youth and adults. We also encourage
37 the development and use of materials and the necessary support to integrate basic
38 agricultural/environmental concepts into K-12 grade instruction.

39 Schools should increase their activities and programs to educate all students about the
40 origins and production practices of food, fiber, and fuel.

41 We encourage the enforcement of penalties for drugs, alcohols, and illegal weapons
42 used or found in schools.

43 To ensure the well being of Ohio youth, we encourage healthy food choices for all
44 Ohio students utilizing Ohio farm products. Vending machines in all school facilities
45 should contain healthy options.

School Funding**205**

We recommend an overhaul of the state foundation formula. With any overhaul, the proportion of revenue from property taxes should decrease with a corresponding increase in revenue from other sources.

We oppose any increase in the 10 mill limitation on inside millage.

Real property tax laws should be changed to benefit schools on a more equitable basis, such as distributing increases and decreases in utility, industrial, and commercial tax revenues on a per pupil basis across the state. Ohio Farm Bureau should oppose any constitutional amendment regarding school funding that is deemed fiscally irresponsible, fails to help rural schools, and lessens the taxpayers' voice as expressed by the state legislature.

We oppose legislation funding public education through cuts in the funding of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. We further recommend that state funding monies be more equitably divided among all local school districts on a per student basis to promote equal education opportunities for all students.

We recommend the State of Ohio explore incentives for schools to develop long term financial plans and establish "rainy day" funds.

School districts should have the option to propose a credit against property tax for any income tax and sales tax approved by the voters. We support a review of the practical benefits of HB 920 for those districts at the 20-mill floor.

We support continued funding for county education service centers from the state education budget.

The Ohio School Facilities Commission should re-evaluate their school building funding policies in relation to sound land use planning. The department's policies encourage abandoning existing buildings and financing only new construction which is often outside villages and in rural areas.

We oppose any attempts by government agencies to take or purchase areas of land for wildlife management, parks or recreation until any adverse effect to the local tax base and school funding is addressed.

As Ohio determines and prioritizes future education programs, the majority of the funds should go to in-classroom needs.

Schools in Ohio should continue to retain their local identities, but we should consolidate administrative costs across district lines. Further efficiencies can be made by incentivizing the use of non-mandatory cost controls, such as health care pooling.

Schools should be permitted to negotiate individual contracts, such as internet, to ensure competitive prices and products.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**Agricultural Research and Education****221**

The Morrill Act of 1862 established the Land Grant colleges to promote a sound and prosperous agriculture and rural life as indispensable to national prosperity and security. We believe that The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the Ohio Farm Bureau should use every economic and political means to assure that The Ohio State University accomplishes its stated mission.

1 The Governor should maintain agricultural representatives on the Ohio State
2 University Board of Trustees.

3 Adequate funding should be maintained for the College of Food, Agricultural and
4 Environmental Sciences, the College of Education and Human Ecology, Ohio
5 Agricultural Research and Development Center, Agricultural Technical Institute, Ohio
6 State University Extension, and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

7 Ohio research facilities should make the best use of money received by avoiding
8 duplication of research projects.

9 The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental
10 Sciences, Agricultural Technical Institute, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development
11 Center, and Ohio State University Extension should emphasize the importance of
12 agriculture in their teaching and research.

13 We support changes to the promotion and tenure system that currently does not credit
14 researchers for their practical advances on behalf of production agriculture.

15 All facets of farm management education should be emphasized in adult education
16 programs, including finance, money management, marketing, production and risk
17 management.

18 We support incubation of training programs for alternative and developing farm
19 businesses.

20 We support the use of farmer check-off money to help finance research programs, and
21 encourage the reinvestment of financial gains, including intellectual property rights, to
22 the entity that funded the research.

23 We support continued funding of adult agriculture education programs throughout
24 Ohio such as the Farm Business Planning and Analysis program. We urge a study on
25 creating innovative ways for farmers to direct funding to specific faculty at agricultural
26 land grant institutions for specific research projects.

27 OFBF supports the timely replacement of extension experts lost through retirement or
28 attrition to preserve the level of expertise developed over many years.

29 We support the Ohio Agricultural Research Fund for the purpose of matching farmer
30 dollars to fund applied agricultural research by the agriculture industry.

31 We urge state political and educational leaders to develop a positive strategy for
32 biotechnology research, development, and consumer education, thereby broadening the
33 markets for Ohio farmers.

34 We support research and promotion of alternate uses of agricultural products and
35 research on cost effective nutrient handling and management.

36 **Ohio State University Extension**

222

37 We strongly support the concept of OSU Extension and its purpose of delivering
38 unbiased research and science-based information to farmers and communities and
39 providing youth development opportunities. However, Extension must undergo a
40 transformation to ensure its long-term sustainability and adherence to this purpose. As
41 part of this transformation, OSU Extension should:

- 42 1. Define its purpose and increase its emphasis on agriculture and natural resources,
43 nutrition and 4-H Youth Development;
- 44 2. Restructure to adopt a workable regional / multi-county concept, while retaining a
45 programming presence in each county;
- 46

- 1 3. Develop a new funding model that is sustainable, equitable, and addresses
- 2 challenges to local funding;
- 3 4. Increase collaboration with other agricultural and/or youth organizations with
- 4 similar missions, which may include collaboration on office space, staffing,
- 5 administrative functions, and/or programming.
- 6 5. Improve communication with constituents regarding this transformation.

7 Youth in every county should have the opportunity to participate in 4-H. In the event
 8 that a county or region no longer has a functioning 4-H program, OSU Extension should
 9 provide a mechanism that allows those youth to participate in 4-H programs in their
 10 respective counties.

11 We encourage OSU Extension to support county extension educator’s efforts to
 12 provide comprehensive programming in all four areas when funding is available.

13 We encourage OSU Extension to modify the new rules for county extension
 14 educators to allow educators to provide programming in areas outside their respective
 15 appointments.

16 We support OSU Extension’s decision to allow counties to choose which specialty
 17 educator they want to employ.

18 In the event that a county 4-H program is terminated mid-year due to lack of funding,
 19 after 4-H members have paid their 4-H dues and started their projects, OSU Extension
 20 nonetheless has an obligation to allow those members to remain 4-H members for the
 21 remainder of the calendar year and finish their projects, including exhibiting such
 22 projects at county and state fairs as 4-H members. 4-H members already participating in
 23 a neighboring county’s 4-H program should be allowed to continue participating in that
 24 program even if their home county loses its 4-H program.

25 In the event that every youth in Ohio does not have the opportunity to participate in 4-
 26 H, we support an amendment to the Junior Fair Livestock Division Competition
 27 Standards to expand eligibility requirements for exhibition of livestock in the Ohio State
 28 Junior Fair to members of other recognized youth organizations (such as Ohio Farm
 29 Bureau Youth) or the youth program of a recognized breeding association (such as the
 30 BEST program through the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association), so long as the organization
 31 provides adequate supervision and training for both participating youth and adult
 32 volunteers, and requires participating youth to complete educational workshops, maintain
 33 records, attend Livestock Quality Assurance training, etc., similar to existing 4-H and
 34 FFA programs.

35

36

HEALTH

37

Health Care

231

39 We support:

- 40 1. The development and implementation of a universal standardized processing
- 41 system for insurance claims and medical administration;
- 42 2. Insurance reform including elimination of mandates; guaranteed renewability of
- 43 policies; and, creation of basic insurance plans and risk pools;
- 44 3. Reform of tax policy to give taxpayers equal incentives for purchasing health
- 45 insurance or for direct payment of health care needs;

- 1 4. The elimination of cost shifting from Medicare, Medicaid and other programs to
- 2 insured patients; and
- 3 5. The continued use of waivers in individual health care plans.

4 We oppose:

- 5 1. Mandated employer provided health insurance and
- 6 2. Reductions in Medicaid reimbursement that will create financial hardship to rural
- 7 hospitals and pharmacies.

8
9 **Health Cost Containment** **232**

10 We oppose the two-tiered medical billing system that differentiates between those
11 who have health insurance and those who do not.

12 We are opposed to additional state mandates. Ohio law should provide for an option
13 for private insurers to offer health insurance policies without state mandated coverage.

14 We support association health plans.

15 Hospitals that are closed should be converted to extended care facilities when such
16 facilities are needed.

17 We encourage the medical establishment to develop medical practice parameters that
18 could be used to place limits on liability and malpractice lawsuits if followed.

19 We urge all health insurance providers, including HMOs and PPOs to clearly
20 communicate to their policyholders the different care options included in the applicable
21 policies and assist policyholders whenever unusual circumstances are encountered.

22 We favor a restructuring of the Medicaid program so that it (1) covers only services
23 mandated by federal law, (2) institutes payment caps for the necessary services and (3)
24 provides incentives to program participants to contain costs through co-pays, tax
25 incentives and health savings accounts (HSA's).

26 We favor a private health care system that provides catastrophic insurance.

27 State government should review Medicaid for cost containment strategies.

28
29 **Health Service** **233**

30 We encourage appropriate agencies to help obtain more health care centers and
31 medical personnel in rural Ohio.

32 We support the utilization of certified physician's assistants and licensed nurse
33 practitioners under the guidance of a medical control center as health care providers in
34 rural counties needing additional doctors.

35 We support community based health care services as cost effective alternatives to
36 institutionalized care.

37 We support the development of more assisted living services for the citizens of rural
38 areas.

39
40 **SAFETY**

41
42 **Safety** **241**

43 The high accident rate on the farm, in the home, and on the highway necessitates a
44 continuing safety program by the organization to keep our members safety conscious.

45 We support the establishment of an educational program that targets security and
46 storage issues associated with farm fertilizers.

1 Convenient certification and re-certification training that includes agricultural
 2 awareness should be made available for emergency medical technicians, fire fighters,
 3 humane agents, first responders, emergency managers, and other public safety volunteers.
 4 We support more realistic training requirements for anyone serving in the foregoing roles
 5 in a volunteer capacity.

6 Since many chemicals, when burned, may emit toxic fumes, we urge the voluntary
 7 use of easily recognized emblems to be posted where chemicals are stored to ensure the
 8 safety of our firefighters.

9 We encourage:

- 10 1. Utilities to place warning sheaths on guy wires in crop fields;
- 11 2. Ear protection symbols be installed on any equipment that will emit sounds
 12 greater than 85 decibels, which is the level of sound that is considered dangerous;
- 13 3. Local residents to display reflective house numbering signs in an effort to reduce
 14 the response time for emergency vehicles;
- 15 4. All farmers to use ROPS (Roll Over Protection Structures) and seat belts when
 16 operating farm tractors.

17 We support the education and use of the NOAA (National Oceanographic
 18 Atmospheric Administration) radio network by working with local and state public safety
 19 officials.

20 **Motor Vehicle/Road Safety**

242

21 We support:

- 22 1. The Ohio Department of Transportation placing solar-powered flashing stop signs
 23 at dangerous rural intersections of state routes;
- 24 2. The placement of reflective tape on all stop sign posts;
- 25 3. Placement of stop signs at intersections should have an indication whether it is a
 26 two-way, four-way, or some other intersection configuration;
- 27 4. Stop ahead signs, rumble strips or blinkers at dangerous intersections. We
 28 encourage the Ohio Department of Transportation to consider local input and give
 29 more emphasis to installation of traffic lights at dangerous rural intersections;
- 30 5. Red and white stripes on all truck beds, semi-trucks and trailers, and amber tape
 31 on farm equipment so they are more visible in hazy and foggy conditions;
- 32 6. Keeping highway white lines painted and installing more surface reflectors at
 33 intersections and on hills and curves;
- 34 7. The development and use of educational materials and testing related to signage,
 35 lighting, signaling, passing agricultural equipment, and safe driving practices;
- 36 8. That all newly manufactured cars be equipped with daytime front and rear
 37 running lamps to ensure driver safety;
- 38 9. Legislation requiring the proper use of additional accessory highway lights that
 39 are typically mounted below the standard headlights. These unfocused high
 40 intensity lights should be used to provide additional wide range illumination only
 41 when the high beams are in use;
- 42 10. Farm machinery should be allowed to be moved on four-lane, unlimited access
 43 highways; and
- 44 11. More liberal use of reduced speed limits on rural roads where road topography
 45 warrants such speed limit reduction.

1 We encourage the proper use of safety belts and child restraint seats.

2 We encourage the use of hands-free communication devices when operating a motor
3 vehicle.

4 We encourage a statewide ban on texting while operating a motor vehicle on public
5 roadways.

6 We recommend that the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles clearly display the county
7 names on all Ohio license plates.

8 We support the standards required to install traffic safety improvements being based
9 on accident/incident rates.

10 We support the use of yellow “Prepare to Stop When Flashing” signs to warn of
11 upcoming traffic lights on high-speed highways or dangerous intersections.

12 ODOT should use the most economical and ecologically safe weed control along
13 highways.

14 We urge the mowing of roadways prior to June 1 and periodically through the
15 summer to control noxious weeds and improve safety. We support mowing and other
16 maintenance to sustain a clear line of vision on the highway right-of-way for a distance of
17 500 feet from any intersection. Landowners should be protected from liability when
18 maintaining road rights of way on their property. All mowing vehicles should display a
19 slow moving vehicle (SMV) insignia and other safety devices, as required by law.

20 We urge the limiting of planting of trees and shrubs at interchanges and along
21 interstate highway right-of-ways in rural areas. As this flora grows, it obstructs driver
22 visibility as well as provides cover for wildlife within short darting distance to lanes of
23 traffic.

24 The movement of farm equipment should be taken into consideration when placing
25 safety guardrails and signage along roadways.

26 A clear handbook should be developed to assist farmers, regulatory agencies, and
27 others with the rules and regulations that apply to on-road transport of farm equipment
28 and materials.

29 We support the use of helmets by riders of motorcycles, bicycles, mopeds,
30 snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles.

31 We support joggers, pedestrians, and cyclists wearing some kind of reflective cloth
32 after night or evening while on all roads and streets.

33 We recommend flashing yellow lights on frequently stopping vehicles for use during
34 predawn and early evening hours.

35 We strongly encourage the Ohio Department of Motor Vehicles to allow options for
36 renewing vehicle registration for commercial vehicles and farm trucks to be conducted
37 via U.S. Mail or the internet.

38 **Railroads and Crossing Safety**

243

39 All railroad crossings should have adequate lights, warning mechanisms or stop signs
40 installed, and all brush, weeds, and railroad cars parked on sidings that obstruct the view
41 at railroad crossings should be removed. All railroad cars should have reflective
42 Department of Transportation tape placed on both sides of the cars.

43 We encourage regular inspection of railroad crossings for potholes and other
44 problems. Any problems should be repaired in a timely manner.
45

1 We support amending the Ohio Revised Code to allow state, county, township and
 2 municipal highway departments to erect stop signs at unlighted and non-gated railroad
 3 crossings.

4 We support that railroads should be required to pay 50 percent of safety
 5 improvements, instead of the current 10 percent.

6 We support improvement of railroad crossing approach ramps and road width
 7 allowances to allow for the safe crossing of large farm equipment and highway vehicles.

8 We believe the responsibility for maintaining line fences on existing railroads and
 9 along abandoned right-of-ways should be enforced, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code
 10 Section 4959.02 (A), even when the railroad property is sold or transferred.

11 **Slow Moving Vehicles** **244**

13 We encourage the use of safety lights and official SMV emblems as required in the
 14 Ohio Revised Code and approved by American Society of Agricultural Engineers
 15 (ASAE) on farm machinery, including all horse drawn vehicles used on public roadways.

16 We encourage proper use of the Speed Indicator Symbol (SIS) for farm equipment
 17 designed to travel faster than 25 miles per hour.

18 We support replacing all old-style farm machinery caution signs with the newer signs
 19 that include the SMV sign.

20 SMV signs should not be used for non-SMV purposes, such as driveway markers.

22 **FOOD SAFETY**

23 **Food Quality and Safety** **251**

25 Regulatory agencies that have jurisdiction over our food supply should have a
 26 coordinated plan so they can respond quickly to give assurance that the U.S. food supply
 27 is wholesome and nutritious. Statements and decisions by state and national government
 28 officials should be based on scientific fact rather than emotional appeals.

29 We object to farmers being required to certify that no chemical residue is present on
 30 food products sold at retail. The farmer has no control on what happens between the
 31 farm and the final market. We support a change from zero tolerance to negligible risk.

32 We will actively promote educating the public, media, retailers, food service
 33 employees, and others to use sanitary practices in the handling and preparation of food.

34 We support the Ohio Produce Marketing Agreement Initiative. We recognize the
 35 need for additional funding to continue the Ohio State University Extension Good
 36 Agricultural Practices Project in Ohio.

37 We support the development of cost effective third party fresh produce audit
 38 verification programs to meet market place demands. Resources should be developed to
 39 assist members in complying with third party audit certification requirements.

40 We support maintaining separate food safety regulations for honey, maple syrup and
 41 sorghum.

42 **Food Labeling** **252**

44 We oppose all use of false and misleading statements on labels, promotional materials
 45 or other advertising for food products.

1 The Ohio Department of Agriculture should require that all food labels in the state be
2 able to substantiate their claims through sound scientific testing.

4 **Farm and Farmer's Markets**

253

5 The Ohio Farm Bureau will work with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio
6 Department of Health to monitor enforcement of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code,
7 and other food safety regulations, as they apply to farm markets, roadside stands and
8 other farmers retailing, processing, or distributing food. If necessary, Ohio Farm Bureau
9 will support technical corrections to the Ohio Revised Code to assure the consistent
10 enforcement of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code and other food safety regulations
11 related to public health issues.

12 Local governments should not exceed state regulations on farmer's markets.

13 We support creating tiers of inspection fees at farmer's markets for meat, poultry and
14 eggs.

15 We recognize the need for Ohio Farm Bureau to work with other interested parties to
16 address insurance, zoning and other regulatory compliance issues that impact the viability
17 of Ohio direct agricultural marketing. We support the definition of a farm market as a
18 market where fifty percent or more of the gross income received from the market is
19 derived from product raised on farms owned or operated by the market operator in a
20 normal year. We support the current exemption of farm markets from township and
21 county zoning.

22 We strongly encourage the continued equitable government funding of the W.I.C.
23 Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Nutrition Program as beneficial
24 programs for Ohio agriculture and Ohio citizens. We support expanding the Senior
25 Coupon/Voucher program to all Ohio counties for obtaining produce from participating
26 local farmers.

27 We support improving the ability for farmer's markets to accept electronic transaction
28 benefit programs and food coupons.

30 **TRANSPORTATION**

32 **Highways**

261

33 Due to the contamination and long term effect on potable water used for drinking,
34 livestock drinking water and irrigation, we recommend the use of alternative ice control
35 methods such as corn by-products, sand or limestone chips, and reduce the use of salt and
36 calcium chloride on federal, state, county and township highway systems in Ohio when
37 feasible.

38 We support steps to get more semi trucks to use the turnpike including, for example, a
39 review of existing load limits and tolls.

40 We support the option of three-shift labor to expedite any contracted highway
41 construction and repair project.

42 The state should assume responsibility for all bridges on the state highway system,
43 regardless of location. ODOT should make the repair and replacement of bridges,
44 including the resizing of bridges for drainage, a priority. We support the use of properly
45 treated wood, especially poplar, in repairing or rebuilding of bridges 40 feet or less in
46 length.

1 We favor revising the qualification standards specified in the Association of State
2 Highway and Transportation manual so Ohio counties can benefit from grants and
3 matching funds for road construction. Current standards are inappropriate for conditions
4 in Ohio and make the construction cost prohibitive.

5 We urge that existing roads and right of ways be used wherever possible for the
6 construction of any proposed highways.

7 The term “highway and road purposes” as used in Ohio Department of Transportation
8 easements should not be altered to include use for commercial advertising or cellular
9 phone towers. We support the right of property owners to refuse the placement of Tourist
10 Oriented Directional Signs on their property. If a property owner agrees to allow a
11 TODS sign to be placed on highway easement, said owner should have the right to collect
12 compensation for said sign.

13 We support the positioning of mailboxes and newspaper boxes according to the
14 Federal Postal Regulations and encourage placing them on the same side of the road. We
15 support enforcement, by either the county engineer or county zoning inspector, of the
16 minimum set back requirement where applicable for mail and paper boxes along state,
17 county, and township roads. If there is not a set-back distance, then one should be
18 established. We propose a standard three feet from the edge of the road set-back for
19 mailboxes to facilitate the movement of large equipment.

20 We support the widening of state, county, and township road berms, and the widening
21 of overpasses during new construction or reconstruction. Access roads should remain
22 open and be maintained until the project is complete.

23 We support maintaining fog lines on the edges of all paved roads.

24 We support a review of the current state funding formula for maintenance and repair
25 of bridges on county roads. The state is responsible for prioritizing funding for projects
26 (rather than the county) and the current formula penalizes counties that have a good
27 bridge maintenance program.

28 We support a revision of the applicable funding formula to increase funds for
29 counties and townships to maintain their roads.

30 Many County Farm Bureaus support the construction, development or expansion of
31 highways in their county and regions. We encourage County Farm Bureaus to be
32 involved in the planning, location and development of the projects. We also encourage
33 Ohio Farm Bureau to work with Ohio Department of Transportation to promote projects
34 deemed worthy by local Farm Bureaus.

35 The Ohio Department of Transportation should be required to plan for the efficient
36 transportation of agricultural commodities, supplies and equipment during periods of
37 road construction and repair.

38 The Ohio Department of Transportation should be required to revise their standards
39 for headwater back up so that they do not cause flooding of farmland due to wrongly
40 sized culverts and drainage structures under roadbeds.

41 We support giving counties the authority to designate reasonable primary travel
42 routes for licensed, heavy vehicles traveling to and from permitted livestock facilities.

43 We encourage the PUCO to regularly inspect railroad crossings for deterioration and
44 to have crossings maintained in a timely manner.

45 We oppose the privatization of the Ohio Turnpike.

1 We support allowing a 25 percent weight variance for farm implements being towed
2 by a licensed motorized vehicle.

3 We support allowing a 25 percent seasonal weight variance for farm equipment.

4 We encourage the State of Ohio and all contiguous states to enter into a compact to
5 recognize each state’s commercial driver’s license exemption, similar to the Ohio/Indiana
6 Agreement.

7 We support farm machinery and implements being exempt from Ohio’s weight laws,
8 except for restrictions on bridges and frost law.

9 The state of Ohio should maintain its fences along its highways, or, in the alternative,
10 allow the landowners to remove a fence in disrepair.

11 Identification signs shall be placed on all interstate overpasses designating the
12 crossroads.

13 Trucks hauling logs, wood chips, mulch, saw dust, sod, coal, aggregates or farm
14 commodities should be exempt from the axle weight law restrictions as long as the truck
15 complies with tire weight limits and gross weight limits, plus the 7.5 percent variance
16 allowed by the Ohio Revised Code.

17 We support revisions of the highway axle limits taking into consideration the tire size
18 and air pressure, not just axle weight.

19 We support the ability of county engineers to establish road maintenance agreements
20 with entities developing and operating projects where heavy and repetitive loads impact
21 road infrastructure.

22
23 **All-Terrain Vehicles** **262**

24 We encourage law enforcement officials to recognize that all-terrain vehicles may be
25 used as agricultural equipment, conducting normal farming activities, and that they be
26 allowed access to roads or road right-of-way when used in farm operations.

27 We support that proof of a safety training course be required of an ATV operator.

28 We support legislation that requires one to obtain written permission from the
29 landowner and show proof of insurance before being allowed to operate ATVs and
30 snowmobiles on other than personally owned or leased property.

31
32 **License Requirement for Drivers of Buses Transporting Farm Workers** **263**

33 We support an exemption from the Commercial Drivers License requirement for
34 drivers of buses used to transport farm workers under the following conditions:

- 35 1. The bus is used to transport farm workers employed by that farm;
- 36 2. The bus shall not be driven on limited access highways; and
- 37 3. The bus shall be limited to a short travel distance per day.

38
39 **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

40
41 **Law Enforcement** **271**

42 We are opposed to repeat offenders being released without serving an appropriate
43 sentence. We oppose reduced recognizance bonds for repeat offenders. We urge that
44 unused public buildings be considered for use as minimum security confinement facilities
45 for non-violent offenders. We urge changes in federal and/or state laws that would
46 permit this action.

1 Since federal and state regulations and limited funds create a problem concerning the
2 construction of adequate jail facilities, we urge that local, state and federal governments
3 cooperate to find funding for regional jails without placing the burden on the local level
4 such as conversion of closed military bases to detention centers or abandoned sites in
5 urban areas for construction of prisons.

6 We feel that current guidelines for state jail construction and subsequent staffing are
7 excessive in providing for those incarcerated and place extreme pressure on county
8 finances. We support efforts to reform current guidelines for construction and staffing so
9 they are more reasonable and simply provide for the basic daily needs of criminals.

10 Because of the current overcrowding and long waiting lists to serve a sentence, we
11 support alternative sentencing practices.

12 We support the concept of guilty but mentally insane, instead of innocent by reason
13 of insanity.

14 We support the establishment of multi-county juvenile detention centers.

15 We endorse neighborhood watch programs.

16 We encourage farmers to report all fertilizer and chemical thefts and suspicious
17 activities.

18 We recommend parental financial responsibility for full payment of vandalism by
19 minors and for retention of minors in detention centers who are convicted of a crime.

20 Whenever possible, convicted offenders should be required to compensate victims for
21 loss, damage or injury caused by their crime.

22 We support legislation allowing revenue from the sale of unclaimed stolen
23 merchandise to help fund crime stopper programs.

24 Law enforcement officials should be required to facilitate the exchange of
25 information among those involved in an accident (i.e., name, address, insurance carrier,
26 etc.). Law enforcement officials should be required to relay information concerning
27 property damage to the respective owner. Law enforcement officers should receive
28 training on agricultural laws such as weight limits, etc., that will meet the requirements of
29 Continuing Education Units for the officers.

30 We support the state department of youth services to fully fund the care and treatment
31 of all youth felons served in their communities by local agencies.

32 We encourage increasing the penalty of theft of any precursor used to manufacture
33 any illegal addictive substance from a misdemeanor to a felony, particularly when a
34 minor is used to procure the substance. We also favor increasing funding for undercover
35 investigations and drug task force agencies.

36 We encourage greater consequences and support stiffer penalties for rural crimes
37 including theft of property and the vandalism and/or destruction of crops or livestock.

38 We favor the utilization and timely updating of state and national law enforcement
39 databases to provide more comprehensive information on criminals and criminal activity.

40 We support the rights of individuals to keep, bear, and carry arms.

41 We support the law enforcement policy of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and
42 local enforcement agency for anyone found guilty of intentionally damaging or
43 destroying a public or private U.S. mailbox.

44 We support enforcing the litter laws to stop the littering of items that can be harmful
45 to farm animals and machinery.

1 We encourage the state, rather than local governments, to cover the cost of legal
2 procedures for those individuals arrested on drug charges or trafficking on the interstate
3 highways.
4

5 **UTILITIES**

6
7 **Electric Service** **281**

8 We recommend rate schedules be established to promote energy conservation, daily
9 off-peak usage and off-peak seasonal usage in agriculture without the penalty of
10 unreasonably high demand charges and minimum monthly bills. Farm rates should
11 match or never exceed the residential rate.

12 The State of Ohio in cooperation with electric utilities should establish an educational
13 program to shift energy use to non-peak times and to mitigate energy charge increases
14 that may result from rate restructuring.

15 We oppose electric companies asking any rate increase to compensate for the loss of
16 income (referred to as delta revenue) from reduced rates given industries, schools, and
17 municipalities.

18 We support legislation that will require municipal power companies to pay the same
19 taxes as other electric companies (gross receipt tax and property tax).

20 We recommend power companies work with customers to locate and resolve
21 problems with stray voltage.

22 Rural Electric Co-ops should not be PUCO regulated.

23 We believe that certain safeguards should guide the transition to deregulation.

24 These include:

- 25 1. Quality service should continue to be provided to all customers;
- 26 2. Cost shifting should not occur between classes of customers; and
- 27 3. There should be retention of exclusive electric distribution service areas.

28 We support a change in the law to make it economically feasible to sell energy from
29 alternative sources to the electric grid including rural electric cooperatives.

30 We are concerned about the possible impact that abrupt electric rate increases would
31 have on Ohio’s farm households, business, and local economies. We support energy
32 policies and regulations that maintain stabilized electric rates and we encourage Ohio’s
33 leaders to move together to solved these issues. We encourage the PUCO to use the tools
34 it already has to ensure Ohio’s electric consumers have access to reliable service and
35 reasonable prices.
36

37 **Natural Gas** **282**

38 We will continue to support and provide access to self-help gas for farmers,
39 processors and handlers. We will support efforts that increase competition in the gas
40 transportation industry.

41 We will monitor the transition of the gas transportation industry into non-regulated
42 competition to ensure that rural landowners are protected. We support participation in
43 residential and small commercial gas transportation programs.

1 **Public Utilities** **283**

2 Stockholders, rather than consumers, should pay those costs of service that can be
3 identified as the result of poor management decisions.

4 Utility companies should be required to maintain their utility cables or lines at an
5 adequate height or depth to avoid damage by agriculture equipment, including entrances
6 into fields.

7 Maintenance should include clearing of impediments in right-of-ways to maintain
8 integrity of utility services.

9 As cable companies expand services, they should be under the regulatory review of
10 the PUCO.

11
12 **Telephone Service** **284**

13 We recommend:

- 14 1. Every telephone company cooperate in providing Extended Area Service (EAS)
15 to contiguous exchanges and that EAS be made available to the county seat where
16 subscribers express interest;
- 17 2. Minimum service requirements for the telephone industry include publishing in
18 each directory all emergency and county governmental office numbers;
- 19 3. That rural communities apply for extended local calling or similar type service
20 where it is to the advantage of subscribers;
- 21 4. Rural subscribers receive the same quality of service (including access to Internet,
22 long distance carriers, and any other services); and
- 23 5. All subscribers be able to call county seat, local school, closest hospital, and
24 attending fire protection toll free.

25 We believe that certain safeguards and protection should remain in place under
26 deregulation of the telephone industry, including:

- 27 1. Required universal service or payment into a subsidy fund;
- 28 2. New entrants create local calling areas of equal to or greater size than those
29 currently in place;
- 30 3. New entrants should respect current EAS agreements;
- 31 4. The integrity of 911 services should be maintained and upgraded by granting
32 county commissioners discretionary authority to add a monthly charge to
33 telephone bills; and
- 34 5. Directory assistance and written directories should be in a standardized format.

35 We oppose the collection of zone charges by local telephone companies.

36 We support increased wireless service in rural areas. We support enhanced 911
37 services for cell phones, voice over internet protocol (VOIP), cable and emerging
38 technologies, and the additional monthly charge to pay for the new technology.

39 We support methods of controlling telemarketing that include:

- 40 1. Individuals listed on the state do not call list should have the option of excluding
41 calls from political organizations and/or candidates and
- 42 2. Prohibiting a telemarketer from blocking his/her name and number from caller ID.

43
44 **Water Supply** **285**

45 A landowner should not be mandated to use a particular water supply.

- 1 **Rural Broadband** **286**
2 We encourage increased access to high speed Internet connections in rural areas,
3 including wireless. We support rural broadband initiatives in Ohio and recognize the
4 increased economic development opportunities that come to rural areas with increased
5 access. We support local government, education and business aggregation to increase
6 demand for rural areas.

SECTION 3: COMMODITIES

SECTION 3: COMMODITIES

ANIMAL CARE

Animal Care

301

We support properly researched, veterinary approved and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that provide consumers with a wholesome food supply. We recognize that animals are personal property and we oppose legislation and/or ballot initiatives that, unless clear abuse is evident, restricts the private ownership or use of animals or that inhibits free trade of any animal provided it meets Ohio Department of Agriculture testing and import requirements. The Ohio Department of Agriculture should administer any animal welfare laws at the state level.

We support the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board (OLCSB) and its uniform set of standards governing the care and well-being of livestock in Ohio that maintains food safety, encourages locally grown and raised food and protects Ohio farms and families.

We support a unified animal agriculture effort to educate the public concerning humane farming practices. We support an aggressive, comprehensive educational program presenting the facts of animal and poultry husbandry and production to elected officials, agencies, allied industries, youth and the general public. We strongly oppose the use of educational materials in our public schools that discourage use of animal products.

We will continue a proactive approach to the livestock care debate in Ohio.

We support the education of the public about the difference between the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and local humane animal agencies. We should establish programs to educate people about the differences between livestock animals and companion animals.

We are opposed to the concept of animal “rights”, the associated elevation of animal rights to those enjoyed by humans, and the expenditure of public funds to promote the concept of animal rights.

We oppose legislation that establishes felony penalties of first time offenders for violations of animal cruelty law; and, we oppose legislation that makes crimes against animals equal to or greater than similar crimes against people.

We oppose privately incorporated humane societies receiving money from fines for animal cruelty convictions. We support legislation to update and revise laws pertaining to the operation of humane societies and the training of personnel. Humane officers should receive training on livestock care provided by livestock industry experts. The Ohio Revised Code needs to be changed to stipulate that all complaints of livestock abuse (excluding companion animals) need to be investigated and processed by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

State as well as federal law should address break-ins, raids, and trespassing on farms and ranches, research facilities and businesses. We support swift prosecution of individuals or groups who would release or steal research animals, destroy data developed from research on animals, release or steal impounded animals and release or steal privately owned, confined animals. Persons destroying or vandalizing property in connection with such activities should be vigorously prosecuted and compelled to make restitution.

1 We support more specific regulations governing the housing, care and movement of
2 exotic animals by private individuals.

3 Livestock farmers following recognized best management practices should have
4 protection under the animal cruelty laws for their activities. We encourage livestock
5 farmers to become certified through their commodity organization's quality assurance
6 program.

7 We oppose the restrictions on the use of antibiotic drugs in farm animals for nutrition
8 and health purposes. Such restrictions should be based only upon sound science and
9 extensive research.

10 We encourage the State of Ohio to develop a state program to encourage veterinary
11 school graduates to work with food and fiber animals by offering financial and other
12 incentives such as student loan repayment.

13 We encourage that The Ohio State University, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio
14 Veterinary Medical Association, Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board and OFBF to
15 cooperate in developing a program to increase large animal veterinarian student
16 enrollment.

17 We oppose legislation that restricts or prohibits a farmer's ability to produce and sell
18 livestock that is raised according to industry accepted animal husbandry practices.

19 We support that oversight authority of any livestock be it conventional, alternative, or
20 exotic rest with the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

21 **Cervidae, Llama, Alpaca and Buffalo** **302**

22 We support that any animal being kept under agricultural farm conditions shall be
23 considered farm livestock and are subject to the policies and regulations as they relate to
24 farm animals.

25 **Companion Animals** **303**

26 We support legislation requiring appropriate vaccination for all pets. Vaccination
27 programs should not be mandated to be carried out by licensed veterinarians except for
28 rabies vaccinations. Rabies vaccinations should be performed by a licensed veterinarian.

29 We support increased education and coordination of local responses to prevent the
30 spread of rabies including statewide rabies vaccinations of dogs.

31 We support continued inspection and licensing of kennels and businesses engaged in
32 the sale of pets.

33 We oppose placing more stringent regulations on the private sale of dogs.

34 **Livestock and Poultry Diseases** **304**

35 We support a voluntary national animal identification system capable of providing
36 support for animal disease control and eradication. We support uniform standards
37 amongst states adopted with industry input. Collection of information and record
38 keeping should stay private and not be held by government. A cost-effective system of
39 livestock identification, with adequate cost-share among government, industry and
40 farmers should be established. Any such program must protect farmers from liability for
41 acts of others after livestock leaves the farmer's hands. The program should ensure the
42 security of farmer information and respect the privacy of farmers by only collecting data
43 necessary to establish a trace back system.

1 We support the Ohio Department of Agriculture having the authority and funding
2 necessary to rapidly respond to animal diseases or bioterrorism.

3 We recommend continued support for the Ohio Department of Agriculture in its
4 brucellosis, tuberculosis, pseudorabies, Johnes disease, equine infectious anemia (EIA)
5 and sheep scrapie eradication or control programs and its current emphasis on virology
6 capability that is vital to Ohio's livestock industry and purebred livestock export
7 program. We recommend the continued use of current Scrapie ID System for sheep and
8 goats. We recommend the State of Ohio take appropriate action to prevent the spread of
9 the West Nile Virus, and to prevent foreign animal disease such as Foot and Mouth,
10 Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Chronic Wasting Disease, Newcastle, African
11 Swine Fever, Classic Swine Fever, contagious equine metritis (CEM) and avian influenza
12 from gaining access.

13 We encourage the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio sheep and wool
14 organizations, and other industry officials to monitor the scrapie problem and to continue
15 appropriate monitoring and eradication programs in light of federal programs. In the
16 interim, all segments of the sheep and lamb industry should meet to develop marketing
17 alternatives for farmers.

18 We support the Ohio Department of Agriculture's cull sow and boar blood testing
19 program.

20 We support the continued use of approved vaccines for prevention of brucellosis in
21 cattle.

22 We recommend that adequate staff or contracted services be maintained at the
23 Department of Agriculture diagnostic lab to meet the requirements of accreditation.

24 We believe there is potential for superior animal diagnostic work and cost savings if
25 the Ohio Department of Agriculture would collaboratively expand diagnostic work with
26 The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

27 We oppose reclassifying certain commonly used animal health products as
28 prescription and/or controlled drugs.

29 We support a voluntary farmer education program to encourage proper administration
30 of medications and feed additives.

31 We support additional research in animal health.

32 We support current animal health requirements on the breeding, sales and movement
33 of privately owned captive cervidae as a means of controlling the spread of disease to
34 domestic livestock.

35

36 **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

37

38 **Crop Protectants**

311

39 We urge the Ohio Department of Agriculture to continue to investigate the pesticides
40 needed for specialty agricultural production and exercise the authority granted to states
41 for registration of such pesticides. We recommend increased funding by the State of
42 Ohio and federal government of the interregional (IR4) program to handle the numerous
43 requests for minor use pesticides registration approvals. Where possible, similar
44 crops/species should be tested, certified, and registered as a group.

45 The Ohio Department of Agriculture should exert due diligence in making sure that
46 Section 18 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requests

1 are filed and approved in a timely manner, as farmers need to be advised of changes that
2 would affect the ability to use minor use pesticides in agricultural production. We
3 support the development of methyl bromide alternatives for Ohio growers.

4 We oppose legislation or regulations requiring applicators to give prior notice of
5 proposed pesticide applications.

6 The chemical applicator, farmer, and/or landowner should not be held liable when
7 applying chemicals according to the label specifications to the proper site.

8 Handlers and farmers must be educated that leaks, spills and labeling accidents may
9 be dangerous to the environment and human health. It is essential that all persons
10 handling pesticides be educated of the dangers and follow all regulations dealing with
11 proper handling and labeling procedures.

12 We support educational programs for cholinesterase testing of private and
13 commercial applicators.

14 We oppose non-affected parties having the right to bring suit or injunction against
15 pesticide users for possible misuse of chemicals.

16 We urge the Ohio Department of Agriculture to minimize the burden on landowners
17 of pesticide restrictions to protect endangered species.

18 We encourage an Ohio program for the return and proper disposal of outdated and
19 unregistered agricultural pesticides without cost or liability to the owner. We support the
20 Ohio Department of Agriculture coordinating this program and support legislation to
21 protect the Ohio Department of Agriculture from legal liability for providing this
22 important service.

23 We support the further development and promotion of Integrated Pest Management
24 (IPM) practices in Ohio. IPM is a defensible use of pesticides because it focuses use
25 where problems have been identified.

26 We urge OARDC to conduct more intensive research into alternative and traditional
27 methods of controlling emerging pest problems.

28 We support continuation of the food safety telephone hotline to inform and educate
29 the media and public regarding the need for the judicious use of pesticides, their benefits
30 and relative safety.

31 We encourage that fees be commensurate with services provided to maintain farmer
32 access to Ohio Department of Agriculture private pesticide licensing programs.

33 Recognizing the law now requires recording the application of restricted use
34 pesticides, we oppose reporting of restricted pesticide use and we oppose mandatory
35 record keeping and reporting of non-restricted use pesticide application. We encourage
36 strict adherence by applicators, either commercial or private, in following label and
37 application instructions to promote proper management and guard against liability.

38 We support the increased use of mini-bulk, eco-packs, and other returnable and
39 recyclable pesticide containers in a variety of sizes.

40 We support the requirement that all people who apply chemicals or pesticides on
41 residential, commercial, or agricultural property have appropriate applicator certification
42 for restricted-use pesticides. We encourage chemical companies to assist in pesticide
43 certification training.

44 We support efforts to maintain current state laws that provide some exemption for
45 intrastate movement of agricultural production materials from U.S. Department of
46 Transportation regulations on transportation of hazardous materials.

1 We encourage the Ohio State University to actively complete Ohio crop profiles
 2 detailing actual pesticide use and potential economical alternatives for use by the U.S.
 3 Environmental Protection Agency as it implements the Food Quality Protection Act.

4
 5 **Anhydrous Ammonia** **312**

6 We encourage research and education on safe additives and deterrents for anhydrous
 7 ammonia that would prevent its illegal use and recommend a program to implement the
 8 use of such additives and deterrents.

9
 10 **COMMODITIES**

11
 12 **Livestock** **321**

13 We encourage an agricultural business climate that promotes the livestock industry
 14 and ensures the opportunity for the livestock industry to remain viable in Ohio.

15 We encourage all farmers to become more engaged in positively promoting and
 16 creating awareness of the benefits of livestock production in Ohio.

17 We oppose any attempt to reduce the current animal number threshold for livestock
 18 facility permitting, however, we believe the regulating agencies should adopt regulations
 19 for livestock facilities not solely based on these levels, but devise a formula considering
 20 factors such as:

- 21 1. The number of animals;
- 22 2. Method of farm management (feed lot, managed grazing);
- 23 3. Water Usage (ground or surface supply); and
- 24 4. Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.

25 Ohio Farm Bureau Federation should work with the Ohio Department of Agriculture
 26 to ensure policies written by the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board protect livestock
 27 farmers from random inspections. Inspections will be conducted only after a written and
 28 signed complaint is submitted by the person suspecting the violation.

29
 30 **Dairy** **322**

31 We support:

- 32 1. The right of Farm Bureau members to market milk through any licensed dairy
 33 processor. We will work with milk cooperatives to increase the potential for
 34 higher milk prices paid to Ohio dairy farmers;
- 35 2. State legislation that enhances the ability of farmer cooperatives to coordinate the
 36 efforts of farmers to bargain for the price and terms of sale of their products. This
 37 relates to bargaining with processors, dealers or manufacturers;
- 38 3. Legislation or a voluntary pooling program that equalizes or creates equity among
 39 and between producers of a commodity priced under market order or other state
 40 coordination authority;
- 41 4. A dairy policy that works with other farm groups and cooperatives to raise dairy
 42 profitability and reduce price volatility;
- 43 5. Modifications in Federal Milk Marketing Orders that will enhance the price of
 44 milk received by farmers and eliminate the make allowance;

6. When a proposed amendment to the Federal Milk Marketing Order structure is offered, a resulting “no” vote should not result in the whole order being eliminated.
7. Improved minimum health and food safety standards for fluid milk based on sound science;
8. Changing the zero tolerance to negligible risk; and
9. Research, development and economic enhancements to promote the capabilities of Ohio’s dairy industry in identifying and capturing greater export and niche markets.

We urge the Ohio Department of Agriculture and/or departments of health to effectively enforce the regulations dealing with the refrigeration of dairy products at the retail and institutional level, including schools.

We encourage:

1. Efforts to revise milk inspection regulations to make the penalties for antibiotic contaminated milk more closely reflect the degree of the infraction. If an infraction occurs, the sample in question must be held for seven days to allow for further testing;
2. Ohio dairy farmers to join the Ohio Dairy Producers Association; and
3. All dairy farmers to consider participating in the Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) program.

We recommend dairy farmers’ proportional representation be maintained on the Milk Sanitation Board.

We oppose:

1. The concept of “pool-riding” and other pricing strategies whereby farmers from different marketing orders circumvent the intended function of the milk marketing orders to gain an unfair pricing advantage;
2. All forms of misleading advertising that suggest or imply an imitation product contains a natural dairy product;
3. The importation of milk protein concentrates, ultra-filtered milk and casein that are not subject to dairy tariff rate quotas consistent with World Trade Organization rules; and
4. The sale of raw milk directly to consumers without proper regulations in place to ensure the highest level of food safety.

Equine

323

Equine should continue to be defined and recognized as livestock. We encourage Ohio’s equine industry to communicate with other commodity groups and to cooperatively work together.

We support the development and establishment of an equine promotion and marketing program for the state of Ohio. Such a program should include representation from all segments of Ohio’s equine industry.

We encourage the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Statistics Service to obtain and include equine data in its annual report as it does for all other species of livestock.

We encourage the education of elected officials, agencies, and allied industries pertaining to equine related issues and urge an economic impact study, including a census of equine.

1 We support the development of effective and humane equine processing facilities in
2 Ohio.

3 We support the increase in the number of and the quality of equestrian riding trails on
4 local metro, state and federal land.

5 We support legislation that provides additional revenue from Ohio's pari-mutuel and
6 related gaming to keep Ohio's equine industry competitive with surrounding states. With
7 these additional funds, we will support all aspects of the Ohio equine industry which may
8 include but not be limited to county fairs, educational activities, recreation shows and
9 research.

10 We recognize the Ohio Equine Industry Coalition as the voice of Ohio's equine
11 industry.

12 We support the OSU Extension's Regional Equine Information Network Systems
13 (REINS) program.

14 **Aquaculture** **324**

15 We encourage the Ohio Department of Agriculture to support and oversee the
16 aquaculture industry.

17 **Grain** **325**

18 We encourage continuing research on management of grain diseases and pests.

19 We encourage the development of new, end-user driven seed varieties.

20 **Grain Handling** **326**

21 We support amending the Ohio Grain Warehousing Law to exempt from licensing
22 written bailment agreements between farmers or farmers and landlords up to 50,000
23 bushels per year.

24 **Grain Indemnity** **327**

25 We support legislation that keeps any funds intended for the grain indemnity fund
26 from being diverted into state general revenue funds.

27 We support additional funding for increased inspection and compliance efforts within
28 the grain indemnity program in times of increased risk.

29 We support the Ohio Department of Agriculture to investigate increasing the Grain
30 Indemnity Fund.

31 We support the Grain Indemnity Fund paying 100% in a deferred payment contract
32 for grain delivered in the current crop year or delivered not more than 90 days prior to the
33 ODA director's suspension of the grain handler's license.

34 **Grain Grading Procedures and Grain Moisture Testing** **328**

35 We urge that a concentrated effort be made through research to find more efficient,
36 accurate and consistent grain testing and sampling devices and procedures. We urge the
37 continual evaluation and certification of grain moisture and grain grading systems and
38 procedures to improve the validity of the process.

- 1 **Seed Regulation** **329**
2 We oppose any law that would require seed handlers/conditioners to register their
3 operations and maintain samples for the purpose of seed piracy reporting and
4 enforcement. We also oppose any law that would involve the Ohio Department of
5 Agriculture in policing seed partner agreements.
6
- 7 **Grains and Oilseeds Marketing** **330**
8 We encourage members to utilize component pricing opportunities.
9 We encourage improvements to the delivery system to the Chicago Board of Trade
10 (CBOT) that support a more uniform convergence of cash grain and CBOT values.
11
- 12 **Grazing Lands** **331**
13 We support the Ohio Grazing Lands Initiative’s efforts to build and provide support,
14 both technical and financial, for Ohio’s grazing lands.
15 We support the efforts of the Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council to represent,
16 develop and promote the hay and forage industry in Ohio.
17
- 18 **Greenhouse and Specialty Crops** **332**
19 We support and promote Ohio’s specialty crops such as greenhouse, fruit and field
20 floral, vegetables, vineyards and wineries. This includes support in lobbying, marketing,
21 financing, insuring and securing energy supplies and adequate research and development
22 funds.
23 To reduce incubation of and the spread of diseases and insects and thereby reduce
24 pesticide use and costs, we support enactment of legislation requiring removal of
25 abandoned commercial vineyards, orchards or conifers grown for resale, and other such
26 crops as applicable, including those located on public owned properties.
27
- 28 **Honey and Bees** **333**
29 We urge counties to make sure there is adequate support for county bee inspection
30 programs.
31 In view of the importance of crop pollination in Ohio, public awareness, educational
32 programs and research should be increased by The Ohio State University to improve the
33 population, health, and productivity of the honeybee, including breeding and other
34 techniques to improve resistance to mites, hive beetles, and diseases detrimental to
35 honeybees. Furthermore, we urge the Ohio Department of Agriculture to increase state
36 funding to educate farmers and individuals on beekeeping to encourage more Ohio
37 farmers to become involved in beekeeping and to raise awareness of colony collapse
38 disorder.
39 We urge the Ohio Department of Agriculture to maintain an apiary section capable of
40 serving the needs of the industry, enforcing current code sections and addressing industry
41 challenges.
42 We support making changes to Ohio Revised Code to allow Ohio Department of
43 Agriculture to determine and assess fees for the Ohio apiary program.
44 We support multiple funding mechanisms to increase beekeeping opportunities in the
45 state.

1 Ohio Farm Bureau supports the development of an improved insurance product for
2 the apiary industry that will cover foreseeable risks at a reasonable cost.

3 We support implementation of the findings of the 2010 Ohio Honey Bee Task Force.
4

5 **Maple Syrup**

334

6 We support additional research at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development
7 Center and The Ohio State University on sweet tree seed and control of parasites and
8 disease on maple trees. We support maintaining the services of a maple specialist within
9 Ohio State University Extension.

10 We support the designation of maple syrup as Ohio's official state syrup.

11 We encourage offering information/educational programs to increase interest in sugar
12 bush production.

13 We support recognizing sugar bushes as part of a wood lot management plan to
14 maintain eligibility for CAUV.
15

16 **Timber**

335

17 We support timber marketing information programs, promoting the industry as a
18 long-term investment, and educational efforts to promote increased timber production in
19 Ohio.

20 Because of the advancement of numerous insects and diseases which could cause
21 severe economic loss to the timber industry, we recommend that there should be adequate
22 Ohio Department of Agriculture funding for monitoring, treatment, quarantine and
23 control of affected areas.

24 We support the permanent eradication of the Asian Longhorned beetle (ALB) through
25 education and early detection.

26 We encourage all levels of government to provide additional levels of funding for
27 education, research, awareness and reforestation of lands affected by emerald ash borer.

28 We encourage all timber owners to have a forest management plan. We encourage
29 farmers and woodland owners to utilize an operation management plan (OMP) approved
30 by their local Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, the technical
31 support of the Division of Forestry, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, other private
32 certified foresters, and the financial support of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in
33 managing their woodlands.

34 We encourage farmers and woodland owners to require timber buyers and harvesters
35 to incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) and a harvest management plan in the
36 development and harvesting of their woodland resources and utilize a contract of sale that
37 follows the minimum basic standards and rights as recommended by the Ohio
38 Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry.

39 We also encourage the Loggers Standard Council and Ohio Forestry Association to
40 pursue more direct oversight of the master logger programs to ensure that master loggers
41 are following the program's specifications. We encourage landowners to include a
42 contractual requirement that a master logger be on site for timber harvests.

43 We support the concept of state, national and private demonstration plots to show the
44 necessity and desired impacts of sound silvicultural practices.

45 We recommend that the state forests stay under the management of the Ohio
46 Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry.

47 We support the continued harvest of timber on state owned land.

1 We encourage timber and forest landowners to utilize USDA NRCS EQIP Funds.
 2 Funds for forest land projects should be cost shared at a rate of 50 percent in order to
 3 have more positive impact on the environment and be made available to more
 4 landowners.

5
 6 **Tobacco** **336**

7 We encourage the State of Ohio Administration and General Assembly to include
 8 provisions for tobacco farms in the current or future settlements with tobacco companies.

9 Under no circumstances should legislators support litigation allowing tobacco farmers
 10 to become a party to lawsuits aimed at recovering damages claimed due to use of tobacco
 11 products.

12 We believe the Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation
 13 Board of Trustees should invest funds in agricultural development, educational assistance
 14 and economic development. We support reinstating the funding for the Foundation.

15 Burley tobacco growers will continue to need a burley tobacco grower’s co-op, which
 16 will need to undergo a series of changes to remain viable and serve the needs of growers
 17 who wish to continue producing tobacco.
 18

19 **COMMODITY INSPECTION**

20
 21 **Inspection Programs** **341**

22 We support an educational program, internship, and/or practical life experience as
 23 prerequisites and qualifications to certify all personnel involved in all state and federal
 24 commodity inspection programs.
 25

26 **State Meat Inspection** **342**

27 We support a state maintained meat inspection program that allows the meat to enter
 28 interstate trade.

29 OFBF should work with ODA to have domestically raised meat rabbits reclassified as
 30 an amenable species for purposes of slaughter inspection.

31 We support changes in the specifications of state contracts for institutional purchases
 32 to allow small packers to bid with supplies smaller than 40,000 pounds. We also urge
 33 that state grading be accepted in lieu of federal grades.

34 We urge that the Ohio Department of Agriculture meat inspectors be trained so that
 35 inspections will be uniform.
 36

37 **CONTRACTING**

38
 39 **Bargaining Contract Marketing** **351**

40 We support amendments to the Ohio Agricultural Contract Marketing Law to
 41 accomplish the following:

- 42 1. A more equitable means of resolving processor-farmer disputes. This type of
 43 change should include the elimination or extension of the March 31 bargaining
 44 deadline and provide for mediation;
- 45 2. Mandatory deductions and forwarding of agricultural association member dues
 46 made by the processing company to which deliveries are made;

1 We support Heartland Agdeavor in its mission to identify and develop farmer owned
2 businesses that will produce value-added products from agricultural commodities. We
3 also support alternative methods of commodity marketing that take advantage of
4 innovative techniques.

5 We support the creation of value-added agricultural facilities.

6 We support the rights of farmers to gain access to markets through equity ownership
7 of processing plants and other marketing opportunities.

8 We strongly encourage the continued state funding of the Ohio Association of Second
9 Harvest Foodbank to utilize surplus Ohio farm products to feed needy Ohioans.

10 We support the continuation of OFBF's Farmers Feed our Needs projects.

11
12 **Agritourism** **365**

13 We encourage agritourism and its viability in Ohio.

14 The Ohio Revised Code should contain a definition of agritourism which should be
15 applied uniformly throughout the state.

16 We support Ohio law providing opportunities for adequate landowner protection
17 associated with agritourism.

18
19 **New Uses for Agricultural Products** **366**

20 We support expanding the funding of research and development of alternative uses of
21 agricultural commodities for sources of energy, medical supplies, building supplies,
22 polymers, etc.

23 We support the BioHio Ag Research Park and the Food and Agricultural Technology
24 Commercialization and Economic Development Program (ATECH), AgBioscience
25 Innovation Grant (ABIG) and Research Enhancement Competitive Grant Program
26 (RECGP).

27 We support the Ohio Bio Preferred purchasing program.

28
29 **Ohio Fairs** **367**

30 We support exempting agricultural societies and historical societies from amusement
31 taxes levied by municipalities.

32 We encourage fair boards to place more emphasis on agriculture and agricultural
33 youth activities at their respective fairs.

34 We support the continued efforts for promotion of farm products, including new and
35 specialized products, featured at the Ohio State Fair.

36 We support additional funding for local junior fairs as administered through the Ohio
37 Department of Agriculture budget.

38 We support strong measures by 4-H, FFA, Fair Boards and the Ohio Department of
39 Agriculture to prevent and discourage livestock tampering and promote good animal
40 husbandry at livestock shows, provide quality assurance training for market animal youth
41 exhibitors, and refocus these programs on their original educational purpose. This should
42 also include development and communication of a strong code of ethics.

43 We endorse the Animal Care Standards as adopted by the Ohio Livestock Coalition.

44 We support legislation that would prevent a board of county commissioners from
45 reducing or diminishing any interest of a county or independent agricultural society
46 without the consent of the affected agricultural society.

- 1 We ask that the Ohio Department of Agriculture, not the State of Ohio Auditor's
- 2 office, do the auditing of county fair boards.

SECTION 4: PROPERTY RIGHTS & TAXES

SECTION 4: PROPERTY RIGHTS & TAXES

INDEMNITY

Indemnification 401

We support the continuation of the Ohio Department of Agriculture's indemnification program for losses of agricultural products when products are impounded, farms are quarantined, or movement or sales are restricted in the public's interest. Farmers should be promptly and fairly compensated. Farmers should not be held responsible for conditions beyond their control. We support that indemnification programs be fully funded.

Ohio Farm Bureau should conduct a study to determine the available methods of protecting farmers who prepay for crop and farm inputs.

Since the indemnification fund is paid for by farmers, it should only be used to protect farmer losses.

Dog Laws and Livestock Indemnity Claims 402

We encourage member Farm Bureaus to work with their county government to promote better understanding and emphasize enforcement of Ohio's dog law. The law provides for indemnity for both dog damage and coyote kills and we support the continuation of this indemnity. We urge close cooperation between dog wardens and wildlife officers in processing coyote indemnity claims. The indemnity should be adequate to replace the loss with a similar commercial animal of like breeding, age, and condition.

We urge livestock farmers to carry adequate insurance to cover loss of unusually valuable animals.

We support financial incentive programs focusing on the prevention of animal control problems rather than their effects.

We support county dog wardens recognizing milk, meat, or fiber producing exotic animals as livestock when paying indemnity claims.

We support the development of a mandatory credible training program for all animal control officers that specializes in dog laws, the identification of damage inflicted by wildlife and domestic animals to livestock, and clearly determines what constitutes animal abuse, neglect and cruelty.

We support stronger dog laws which give dog wardens and/or judges more options and the necessary authority to appropriately deal with domestic dogs that have killed livestock.

PROPERTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Eminent Domain 411

We oppose government entities taking prime farmland for public purposes, including but not limited to public water supplies, public utility pipelines, highways, metropolitan parks, linear parks, wildlife areas and trails. Where such facilities are needed for the public welfare, the government entity should:

- 1 1. Purchase land areas from willing sellers when possible;
- 2 2. Assume all legal responsibilities and tax obligations for the property acquired by
- 3 eminent domain, for example CAUV recoupment;
- 4 3. Compensate farmers and other landowners for property taken, and right of
- 5 ways/easements, inconvenience suffered, and for damage that may occur to them
- 6 and to nearby property owners;
- 7 4. Determination of compensation should be made prior to project initiation, except
- 8 for true cases of public exigency;
- 9 5. Limit wellhead protection requirements to real case scenarios - for example, light
- 10 sandy soils;
- 11 6. Pay for capital costs caused by wellhead protection ordinances;
- 12 7. Replace water supplies at no cost to the landowner for as long as the landowner
- 13 has a need for water; and
- 14 8. Mitigate adverse effects to adjoining property owners for any facility that may be
- 15 developed.

16 The condemning agency should first establish the need for the project by using
17 cost/benefit analysis, and availability of capital funds for the project. Funds should be
18 made available to the landowner for an appeal process before condemning the land. All
19 necessary economic impact studies and environmental impact studies, etc. should be
20 completed prior to initiating condemnation. Any damage occurring should be reimbursed
21 to the landowner.

22 Ohio should broaden its definition of ‘public notice’ for ODOT construction projects
23 to facilitate as much local input as practicable.

24 When the state publicly identifies a corridor for a projected state highway project, all
25 the land in that corridor must be purchased within three years of identification of the
26 corridor or, if not, all the restrictions on the property should expire. If a proposed project
27 is delayed for a period of 18 months or more, the landowner should be compensated 10
28 percent of the fair market value of the land.

29 We believe municipalities should be limited in their use of condemnation proceedings
30 to secure land and facilities outside of the municipal corporation.

31 We oppose the practice of eminent domain for private development purposes.

32 We believe government entities should compensate original landowners for loss of
33 use of their land and for any profits realized on resale of land taken by eminent domain.
34 Landowners of property taken by eminent domain should be compensated at prevailing
35 market rates, including best alternate uses, established before the threat of eminent
36 domain is publicly known.

37 If the original public use of a property taken by eminent domain is abandoned, the
38 previous landowner and adjacent landowners should have a right of first refusal to
39 purchase the property.

40 Metropolitan parks and/or park districts have the power of eminent domain. We
41 oppose the use of eminent domain for recreational purposes. If eminent domain is to be
42 used outside the “base county” of the metro park and/or park district, the county
43 commissioners in that outside county must approve the eminent domain action.

44 We support legislation that allows conservation easements to supersede eminent
45 domain.

1 Ohio's quick take statute should be amended to limit the government's right of quick
2 take to emergency actions only.

3 4 **Railroad and Canal Land Abandonment** **412**

5 Many railroad lines and canal lands have been abandoned with tracks and bridges
6 already removed. When the railroad or canal has ceased to function, if the abandoned
7 right-of-way had been purchased, it should be offered to the individual adjacent property
8 owners first, at a fair market price. If an agreement cannot be reached, a committee of
9 three (one appointed by the buyer, one by the seller, and a third member by the other two)
10 should be appointed to establish a fair market price. If the railroad or canal had an
11 easement, then the right-of-way should revert back to the adjacent landowner.

12 Abandoned railroad crossings on township and county roads should be restored to
13 proper grade.

14 Abandoned railroad property should be disposed of within two years after the rails are
15 removed.

16 The adjacent property owners should be given the right to purchase any abandoned
17 right-of-way that is not currently owned by the adjacent landowner, with a condition that
18 it may be purchased or leased for a utility or rail transportation when it is needed for
19 either of those purposes, rather than create a new easement.

20 Land surveys should be conducted of all abandoned railroad property whenever the
21 real estate is transferred. The railroad company should pay cost of survey.

22 23 **Bicycle, Recreational, Equine and Greenway Trails** **413**

24 When abandoned rail lines or other areas are converted into bicycle, recreational,
25 equine and greenway trails, landowners' rights should be protected. The following
26 concerns need to be addressed:

- 27 1. The cost of adequate fencing, if desired by the adjoining landowner, be borne by
- 28 the developer;
- 29 2. Satisfactory law enforcement and security;
- 30 3. Safety of both the users and landowners;
- 31 4. Local government expense, including maintenance;
- 32 5. Protection of adjoining landowners from liability to trespassers;
- 33 6. Trespassing and littering;
- 34 7. Provision for parking facilities at various locations;
- 35 8. Proper drainage is maintained; and
- 36 9. Landowners maintain access via an easement when trails bisect property.

37 We oppose:

- 38 1. The development of bicycle, recreational trails and greenways when the purpose
- 39 is, in whole or part, to facilitate the annexation of additional tracts of land;
- 40 2. Legislation that denies or postpones any reversionary property rights or interest of
- 41 property owners adjacent to railroad, utility, or road right-of-ways that are
- 42 abandoned for any reason; and
- 43 3. The use of state gas taxes for the construction, improvement, and maintenance of
- 44 bikeways, bike transportation facilities and walkways.

1 We encourage:

- 2 1. The use of voluntary incentive-based programs for the creation and management
- 3 of trails and greenways;
- 4 2. The adoption of legislation that requires the trail developer to maintain fences,
- 5 provide drainage, and control weeds as required of railroads in Chapter 4959 of
- 6 the Ohio Revised Code. Between the time of abandonment of the railroad line
- 7 and construction of the trail, the adjoining landowner should be allowed to use the
- 8 abandoned railroad easement;
- 9 3. The adoption of legislation that requires that the integrity of the location of the
- 10 railroad line be maintained during development of the trail; and
- 11 4. Members to become active in local organizations involved in the planning,
- 12 acquisition and management of bicycle, recreational, equine and greenway trails.

13 We support class-action litigation filed on behalf of landowners adjacent to
 14 abandoned railroad lines against railroads that have used the railroad lines for utility
 15 easements in contravention of the landowners' property rights.

17 **Utility Easements**

414

18 In order to protect landowners' rights and preserve important farmland, we urge that
 19 utility easements follow existing corridors whenever possible.

20 Landowners or tenants should not be liable for any damage to underground or above
 21 ground utilities that arise from normal farming practices.

22 Utilities should be responsible for damages occurring on landowners' property
 23 including tile. We support legislation that would require public or private utility
 24 companies to post a monetary bond or a cash deposit with the county before they are
 25 allowed to install underground utility lines in the county to pay for right-of-way
 26 restoration (i.e. tile, driveways, grade, etc.) Property damaged by the utility should be
 27 repaired to original condition.

28 We recommend that all new buried utility lines be located at a minimum depth of 5
 29 feet, or a mutually agreed upon depth, and that the property owner be notified five days
 30 prior to actual installation.

31 We urge open dialogue between local public utilities, community leaders, businesses,
 32 interstate pipeline companies and government agencies to ensure the proper planning and
 33 development of local and interstate pipeline to serve growing communities.

34 Approval by the appropriate local political subdivision should be required before a
 35 rural utility service can assess individual property owners.

36 When a public utility plans to procure easements and/or utilize existing easements,
 37 said public utility shall notify the affected landowner by certified mail no later than 30
 38 days prior to the date of the first public hearing.

39 Any proposed pipeline project must address the real need and the real environmental
 40 issues, including but not limited to: disturbance of watersheds; tillage and drainage
 41 systems; crop production loss; safety due to proximity of homes and buildings; and
 42 devaluation of property values. In the event the pipeline is approved, the pipeline
 43 company should be required to follow the agricultural mitigation provisions prepared by
 44 the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This requirement and
 45 other restrictions should be clearly stated in an easement agreement between the pipeline
 46 company and the landowners.

1 We oppose broader interpretation of existing right-of-way easements that allows
2 utilities to expand their access.

3 When the original use of a utility easement is completed, the law should allow for the
4 easement to be cancelled with proper notice and process.

5 **Property Ownership Responsibility** **415**

6 Public landowners of real property including ODNR and other state government
7 agencies should be held to the same responsibilities, rules and laws as private
8 landowners.

9 We encourage the development and distribution of educational materials regarding
10 the responsibilities of property owners relative to line fences, surface and sub-surface
11 drainage, CAUV, Agriculture Districts, farm odors, dust, noise, use of roadway by farm
12 equipment and other good rural neighbor policies and customs. Such materials should be
13 available to all property buyers in cooperation with local realtors, lenders, county
14 recorder's offices and the Farm Bureau.

15 We support notification of change in property lines under new surveys.

16 **Drainage** **416**

17 We support Ohio's drainage law and will work with the local Soil and Water
18 Conservation Districts to inform farmers of its benefits. We urge county governments to
19 keep agricultural interests at the forefront in considering any drainage projects, and to
20 consider the economic loss to farmers when drainage ditches are not cleaned and
21 maintained.

22 We believe it is a fundamental right of all farmers to improve their lands for crop
23 production. In order to ensure that this right is not taken away, we recommend that the
24 current drainage law be comprehensively reviewed and amended to address the following
25 concerns:

- 26 1. Require county government to clean or establish a drainageway system to ensure
27 roadway waters and their associated pollutants and biohazards are directed away
28 from agricultural commodities that may be affected;
- 29 2. Require a neighboring property owner, public utility or highway to provide access
30 to subsurface drainage outlets in accordance with Natural Resources Conservation
31 Service (NRCS) recommendations;
- 32 3. Require governmental authorities granting building permits and private entities
33 developing land should analyze the impact on neighboring property owners;
- 34 4. Require the installation of drainage facilities which meet Natural Resources
35 Conservation Service guidelines and which minimize the adverse impact on
36 neighboring property;
- 37 5. Provide the opportunity for property owners to collect compensation (plus
38 attorney fees and costs of the lawsuit) for damages caused by an increase in the
39 flow of surface water or a change in the drainage pattern from a neighboring
40 property;
- 41 6. Prohibit all development (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) and any
42 developers from adding more flow to agricultural land drainage systems without
43 paying for needed improvements and long-term maintenance fees;
- 44
- 45

- 1 7. Protect and prevent the destruction of existing underground drainage systems and
2 require those responsible for the damage of tile lines to repair lines and pay
3 damages;
- 4 8. Establish a program to mark/record tile placement; and
- 5 9. Enable county subdivision regulations to require drainage access for new lot
6 splits.

7 We recommend farmers use cooperative agreements on ditches whenever possible.

8 Any easement taken for drainage improvements shall be strictly limited to drainage
9 improvements and maintenance and no other purposes.

10 When a majority of landowners agree to a drainage improvement, whether voluntary
11 or statutory, we oppose county commissioners, county engineers, soil and water districts,
12 or any other agency from securing or obtaining permanent easements to be placed over
13 drainage systems when doing conservation works or improvements.

14 We believe that a ditch survey, conducted by the Soil and Water Conservation
15 District or the county engineer, should be accepted by either party in the event a ditch
16 project moves from one jurisdiction to the other, whether a cooperative or petition ditch.

17 Cost sharing should be available for all open and subsurface drainage practices when
18 such practices will control soil erosion.

19 We encourage state, county, and municipal engineers to work with property owners
20 and soil and water conservation people where road drainage ties in with farm drainage.

21 We recommend that all units of government be required to maintain ditches and tile
22 on their property, which drains the land of adjacent property owners.

23 We support establishing a universally recognized sign to mark tiles at road crossings
24 and property boundaries. Placement of signs would be at the landowner's expense and
25 option.

26 Landowners should be notified when maintained drainageway maintenance is going
27 to occur. We encourage landowners to mark tile outlets in ditches to avoid damage by
28 mowers. Individuals, utilities, and/or government agencies responsible for destroying
29 marked tiles would be liable for restoration under National Resources Conservation
30 Service supervision.

31 We recommend that programs be developed to educate landowners about drainage
32 laws through real estate transactions.

33 Whenever the state or county highway departments replace a culvert or small bridge
34 over a dry run, the subsurface farm drainage tile that crosses under the highway at the
35 same location should also be included in the project. Such tile should be replaced with
36 highway grade tubing or concrete culvert. The length of the replacement should be the
37 greater of the highway right of way or the project area.

38 All maintained drainageways, county maintained or otherwise, should be classified as
39 "modified" or "historically channelized" maintained drainageways to retain their purpose
40 of farm drainage and not be considered a navigable waterway subject to biological and
41 recreational use designations.

42 We strongly encourage every county government to timely adopt effective
43 countywide drainage regulations.

44 We support the ODNR Division of Soil and Water in its efforts to meet Ohio's rural
45 drainage challenges. This is an organized effort which consists of two parts: (1)
46 Analyzing Ohio's drainage infrastructure needs and solutions, and (2) Development of

1 “Maintained Drainageway” Best Management Practice (BMP) Manual for maintenance
2 and construction.

3 We support increased adoption of innovative ditch geometry practices and the
4 provision of incentives to adopt such practices.

5 We support a better method to quantify the costs and benefits of a maintained
6 drainageway in the petition ditch law.

7 Ohio has an aging rural drainage infrastructure that is in need of repair. To address
8 this need, we support the establishment of a county drainage rotary loan fund to provide
9 counties the opportunity to manage drainage improvement projects. The initial
10 capitalization of the drainage rotary fund should be based upon an assessment of 50 cents
11 (\$.50) per acre enrolled in CAUV. Funds collected would be used to offset the cost of
12 constructing the drainage improvement project and providing environmental
13 improvement.

14 We support the adjustment for inflation of the 20% ditch maintenance fee for ditches
15 constructed or repaired after January 1, 2010.

16 Sellers of land in amounts below 20 acres should be required to disclose drainage
17 patterns and problems at the time of sale.

18 **Adverse Possession**

417

19 We support a change in the Ohio Revised Code that would require a person claiming
20 land by adverse possession to prove that he/she paid the taxes on the disputed property
21 during the time that he/she claims to have possessed the land adversely. This would be in
22 addition to all other elements of title by adverse possession as required by law.

23 We support legislation that would more clearly define what constitutes adverse
24 possession of land. We believe utilization of land across boundary lines for profit should
25 not constitute adverse possession.
26

27 **Trespassing**

418

28 We will support legislation to increase criminal penalties and establish a mandatory
29 fine and full restitution of property damaged by individuals found guilty of trespassing
30 and unauthorized activities.

31 We support legislation to clearly spell out landowners’ rights as they relate to
32 trespassers and provide landowners immunity from civil liability in connection with
33 injury, death or loss to trespassers.

34 We encourage local law enforcement to prosecute trespassers.

35 We support legislation that may provide for seizure of implements used in trespass,
36 such as all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and vehicles and for an allowance of the
37 collection of damages that would be multiplied for remuneration.

38 We support legislation that strengthens “attractive nuisance laws” so as not to put
39 landowners at risk for unreasonable lawsuits.

40 To perform a boundary survey, the surveyor should be able to enter adjacent private
41 property as long as written notice is provided to adjacent landowners at least two days in
42 advance and the surveyor pays for any damages caused on the adjacent properties.
43

1 **Cemeteries** **419**

2 We support and encourage our members to continue preserving our agricultural
3 heritage by respecting on-farm cemeteries. We support the real property laws now in
4 place, which keep a closed private cemetery where there have been no burials in 75 years
5 the size and status it is today.

6
7 **Homeland Security** **420**

8 We support the protection of individual rights and property rights when affected by
9 Homeland Security issues.

10 We oppose the mandatory use of social security numbers as a means of identification
11 unless authorized under the Right to Privacy Act of 1974.

12
13 **LAND USE**

14
15 **Land Use Planning** **431**

16 We will work for sound land use legislation and programs.

17 We support the establishment of a farmland preservation strategy that coordinates and
18 guides state and local policies, programs and actions so as to avoid and minimize the
19 unnecessary and irretrievable conversion of productive agriculture land to nonagricultural
20 uses. Ohio Department of Agriculture should maintain final decision authority on
21 acceptance into the agriculture easement program.

22 We encourage the development of countywide, comprehensive land-use plans as an
23 integral part of farmland preservation. Local control and local involvement should be
24 emphasized.

25 We encourage members to serve on zoning commissions and on boards of zoning
26 appeals.

27 We encourage members to be involved in the development and implementation of
28 countywide comprehensive land-use plans.

29 We support the use of Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Funds for the
30 preservation of farms that contain creeks, streams, woods, or natural wetlands.

31 We support the preservation of prime land (classes I and II) and other land especially
32 capable of dairy, equine, livestock, fruit, forestry, and specialty crop production by
33 encouraging involvement in the following programs:

34 1. Agriculture Easement Purchases

35 Investigation, development and implementation of funding and tax incentive
36 programs for the preservation of farmland through the acquisition and transfer of
37 development rights and an impact fee paid by individuals who convert farmland
38 to non-agricultural uses. When land is sold for development, an impact fee based
39 on quality of land should be charged to the developer and used for farmland
40 preservation.

41 2. Agriculture Easement Donations

42 Research, funding, and implementations of voluntary programs to keep land in
43 agricultural use.

- 1 3. Agriculture Districts
2 Protection of land in accordance with the Farmland Preservation Act (agricultural
3 districts). The statute helps landowners deal with water, sewer, and electric
4 assessments, nuisance lawsuits and powers of eminent domain.
5 The Agriculture District Law should be strengthened by:
6 a. Lowering the acreage and percentage of land taken to trigger Ohio
7 Department of Agriculture review of eminent domain.
8 b. Requiring legal service on the eminent domain action by the Ohio Department
9 of Agriculture.
10 c. Providing greater protection against nuisance lawsuits.
11 d. Allowing for deferred assessments for infrastructure improvements such as
12 roads, sidewalks and private water companies, including transportation
13 improvement districts.
14 e. Providing additional protection against eminent domain.
15 f. Creating a uniform agricultural district application process for all lands
16 (whether the land is inside or outside of the city limits).
17 g. Changing the Farmland Preservation Program rules to allow a farm that has
18 acreage in two or more counties to submit one application in the county where
19 the homestead is located, or where the majority of the acres are located.
20 4. Agriculture Security Areas
21 Those operations that meet the definition of agriculture as currently defined in
22 Ohio law, regardless of size, production method, or business structure, should be
23 designated agriculture, not commercial. We support a reduction of the 500 acre
24 threshold to 100 contiguous acres to enroll in an Agricultural Security Area
25 (ASA), however, the incentive to enroll in an ASA should be higher the more
26 acres that are enrolled.
27 5. Local and State Land Use Policies
28 We recommend programs to address the following issues:
29 a. Land use decisions made locally with adequate rural participation in sub-
30 division regulations;
31 b. Recognition of basic property rights of individuals. State law or regulation
32 should not take away the economic value of property without fair
33 compensation;
34 c. Effective zoning to meet the needs of rural Ohio. We recognize the
35 challenges being made to agricultural practices by zoning commissions and
36 encourage members to fight these challenges and continue to support
37 agriculture's exemptions from Ohio's zoning laws;
38 d. Promotion of orderly development of urban areas including:
39 (i) the concentration of further development;
40 (ii) the avoidance of needless sprawl of both strip and leapfrog
41 development;
42 (iii) the redevelopment of existing urban areas already served by
43 infrastructure and public services;
44 (iv) the redirecting of business and industry into rehabilitated brownfields by
45 providing appropriate incentives; and

- 1 (v) support for a reduction in taxation as an incentive for people who
 2 rehabilitate old homes or build new homes on existing home sites.
- 3 e. Infrastructure repair and reinvestment rather than new infrastructure
 4 development. In the case of new development, fully allocate all costs to the
 5 land developers and purchasers. Urge passage of legislation giving clear
 6 permission for political entities to impose impact fees on new non-agriculture
 7 construction;
- 8 f. Coordination at all governmental levels, with consideration of adjoining land
 9 uses from county to county and from community to community;
- 10 g. Long term highway construction right-of-way needs should be incorporated in
 11 any comprehensive land use plan. The Ohio Department of Transportation
 12 should make reasonable efforts to avoid taking prime farmland when planning
 13 a road project;
- 14 h. The Ohio Department of Development should revise their program on “shovel
 15 ready” sites to give priority to infill and redevelopment of property rather than
 16 to clean sites of high acreage;
- 17 i. We oppose zoning restrictions on timber harvesting in municipalities and
 18 other political subdivisions;
- 19 j. State and local economic development initiatives should be required to
 20 include production agriculture in their recommendations;
- 21 k. We oppose efforts to impose the installation of riparian buffers through
 22 zoning because it is a taking of private property. We encourage the
 23 development of educational programs to improve the understanding of
 24 farmland preservation and land-use issues. Some topics of importance are:
 25 (i) Economic impact of the loss of prime farmland
 26 (ii) Conservation Security Programs and Carbon Credit Programs
 27 (iii) Economic importance of agriculture business and agriculture related
 28 businesses of local economics.

30 **Water and Sewer Rotary Fund**

432

31 Under the Farmland Preservation Act, city councils must act upon agricultural
 32 districts within the city limits. City councils may disapprove them because a water and
 33 sewer assessment cannot be collected. Therefore, we strongly recommend that adequate
 34 funds be maintained in the water and sewer rotary fund for use by municipalities so they
 35 can approve agricultural districts within the city. A review of the water and sewer rotary
 36 fund should be conducted to determine its role in the farmland preservation movement.

38 **Transportation Improvement Districts**

433

39 We oppose TIDS in their entirety. TIDS are quasi-governmental agencies with the
 40 power of eminent domain, taxation of property, and trespassing rights over one’s own
 41 private property.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Local Government

441

As a cost savings measure, we support the evaluation of increased efficiencies in local government. Furthermore, we should incentivize local governments to eliminate inefficiencies, both with respect to multiple units of government and within the unit itself.

We support allowing local governments the ability to share resources and to more efficiently offer services while still maintaining each unit’s identity.

We support state legislation to provide a larger percentage of available funding for local governments.

We oppose the imposition of auditing fees and requirements that can burden local governments with excessive costs.

We encourage more accountability to the general public by members of boards and commissions. The general public should elect members of park districts. Members of other boards, commissions (i.e. planning commission, zoning commission), water districts and sanitary districts should be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or Board of Township Trustees. Any public entity that receives public tax money should be held accountable for the funds by audit available to the public. We support legislation that restructures the boards of conservancy districts to include stakeholder representation (i.e. agricultural community, soil and water conservation districts, residents).

While conservancy district flood control programs are recognized as important and necessary, we oppose attempts to physically expand conservancy districts into additional jurisdictions, and we also oppose their attempts to expand their mission and authority beyond their legislated purpose. We support county commissioners’ approval before a county outside the original conservancy district is included in any conservancy sub-district. There also needs to be a method for a county to remove itself from a sub-district.

The process and protections found in O.R.C. 6101.03 for the formation of a conservancy district should be included in O.R.C. 6101.39 for the amendment of a conservancy district plan.

We support changes to conservancy districts to provide checks and balances of their operation and give residents a voice.

The board members of conservancy districts should either be appointed by county commissioners or elected by the public. Laws governing conservancy districts should be amended to require the process to be more transparent.

We support the current judicial organizations based upon county elected judges. We oppose district judicial areas that combine several counties with one elected judge and several appointed magistrates. Court systems need to live within their budgets as set by the county commissioners. We support limitations on judges and prosecutors for the purpose of bypassing the appropriations process.

The Ohio Revised Code specifies that after an elected public official has neglected his office for 90 days, the office shall be deemed vacant. We believe this is too lax and should be re-evaluated.

We oppose any expansion of a municipality’s right to require the approval of a plat beyond the three-mile radius found in current law.

1 We support implementation of the legislation establishing the fuel quality testing
2 program.

3 County engineers should possess a civil or construction engineering qualification and
4 not be required to be a certified surveyor.

5 Township trustees should be granted the authority to offer a reward for information
6 leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals vandalizing township properties.

7 The limit on Force Accounts should be raised.

8 We support legislation requiring all mortgage companies to reimburse the sheriff's
9 department for costs incurred when foreclosing property is to be sold at sheriff's auction.

10
11 **Annexation** **442**

12 We continue to oppose balloon annexation whereby a narrow corridor leads to the
13 annexation of large tracts.

14
15 **Boards of Health/Health Districts** **443**

16 We oppose local Boards of Health/Health Districts having authority over the
17 placement of line fences.

18 We oppose local Boards of Health/Health Districts having the authority to regulate
19 livestock, including the siting of facilities.

20 We support local legislative oversight for Boards of Health/Health Districts.

21
22 **Mandates** **444**

23 Neither the state nor federal government should place mandates without providing
24 funds for the life of the mandate.

25
26 **Public Library Services** **445**

27 We support high quality public library services that promote continued learning by all
28 citizens.

29
30 **LAWSUITS**

31
32 **Environmental** **451**

33 When lawsuits are filed on environmental and nuisance matters and the case is
34 dropped, or fails, all court costs and attorney fees of the defendant, as well as the
35 plaintiff, should be paid by the plaintiff.

36
37 **Tort Reform** **452**

38 We support civil litigation reform in Ohio.

39 We support constitutional limitations and control of civil tort litigation, including but
40 not limited to proper control of nuisance and medical malpractice lawsuits.

41
42 **STATE GOVERNMENT**

43
44 **Cost Savings** **461**

45 State agencies should incentivize managers and employees to save costs.

46 Incentives should be created to encourage agencies to reduce their spending.

1 Using performance audits, sunset review provisions and other available tools, the
2 legislature should review all services and programs and eliminate low-performing
3 programs to balance the state budget.

4
5 **Public Employee Benefits and Compensation** **462**

6 Public employee compensation should be commensurate with private company
7 salaries and benefits. Comparisons should only be made when similar work is being done
8 by individuals with similar experiences.

9 The state should conduct a comprehensive review of pay scales, job descriptions, and
10 qualifications.

11 The State of Ohio should continue to study health care pooling and encourage its
12 adoption, where appropriate.

13 State law should permit the use of health care pooling for all governmental entities.
14 State agencies and instrumentalities should be required to utilize health care pooling if it
15 realizes cost savings.

16
17 **State Retirement Systems** **463**

18 Public employee retirement plans should be comparable to those in the private sector.

- 19 1. Employer contributions to state/local government employee retirement systems
20 should be in line with employer taxes in the private sector.
- 21 2. Public retirement systems should be self-funded to meet their obligations. This
22 may require adjusting current rules including but not limited to:
 - 23 a. Length of service to qualify;
 - 24 b. Ability to receive retirement benefits before reaching federal retirement age;
 - 25 and
 - 26 c. Ability to rehire past retired members.

27 Government should consider a two-tier system where new employees have a
28 retirement system based on defined contributions.

29
30 **Performance Audits** **464**

31 Unbiased comprehensive performance audits should be conducted on state agencies
32 by outside entities.

33 More targeted program specific audits or compensation audits should also be utilized.

34
35 **Sunset Review** **465**

36 Sunset Review is a useful process and should be continued.

37 In addition to boards, commissions, committees and councils the process should also
38 be used to evaluate cabinet level state agencies.

39
40 **Checks and Balances** **466**

41 Specific criteria should be developed before creating dedicated or “rotary account”
42 funds.

43 State government should reduce reliance on fee and permits to fund programs and
44 should recognize that fees are a form of taxation.

45 Philosophically, OFBF supports giving the General Assembly and the Governor the
46 primary oversight for funding priorities.

- 1 1. Essential state programs should be funded by state tax dollars.
- 2 2. Those programs not essential to state government should be studied and possibly
- 3 referred for consolidation or elimination.
- 4 3. To ensure rigorous consideration of programs, Ohio should adopt a “zero-base”
- 5 budget system for general revenue funds.

7 **Long Term Budgeting** 467

8 Ohio should adopt a long term, strategic approach to budgeting. The public and
 9 private sectors should both be engaged in the long term plan, which should be bipartisan
 10 in nature. The plan should include both financial aspects (such as economic projections)
 11 and social demographics. The planning process should not be binding on future
 12 policymakers and should be updated as needed. Programs that have long-term costs
 13 should not be initiated with one-time dollars.

15 **Privatization of Programs and Assets** 468

16 A study should be commissioned to identify potential efficiencies in privatizing state
 17 services such as: workers’ compensation, the management of Ohio’s prisons, highway
 18 right-of-way maintenance (mowing, litter pick-up, etc.), property management and
 19 janitorial services. Recommendations should be implemented in a thoughtful manner
 20 without undue interruption to ongoing state business.

21 State government should also prepare a central inventory of state properties and
 22 assets, and then utilize the central inventory to identify state owned property and assets
 23 that can be sold to or better managed by the private sector.

25 **REGULATORY REFORM**

27 **Regulatory Reform** 471

28 We support the use of sound science and economic feasibility in the development and
 29 establishment of regulations applied to agriculture. We oppose the use of the
 30 precautionary principle in identifying rationale for new regulations.

31 We oppose the concept of “mission creep” whereby any agency extends its authority
 32 beyond the original intent of rules and regulation.

33 We support the actions being undertaken by state government to initiate broad
 34 regulatory reform through the establishment of guidance, standards and principles for the
 35 adoption and administration of regulations. We believe that this process needs to
 36 incorporate the following principles:

- 37 1. Recognition of property rights as the foundation for resource production;
- 38 2. The regulations are based upon sound scientific data which has been subject to
- 39 replication and peer review;
- 40 3. A risk assessment analysis should be conducted prior to the promulgation of a
- 41 regulation;
- 42 4. An estimate of the costs and benefits associated with public and private sector
- 43 compliance with the regulation must be conducted prior to promulgation of the
- 44 regulations;
- 45 5. Regulations should allow for flexibility of rules and regulations to fit varying
- 46 local conditions;

- 1 6. The regulations have been subject to independent analysis and public scrutiny;
- 2 7. Alternatives to regulation have been considered, especially the provision of
- 3 market-based incentives;
- 4 8. The regulations respect the practicalities of doing business in the industry being
- 5 regulated;
- 6 9. The presumption of innocence as opposed to the current presumption of guilt
- 7 should be strengthened;
- 8 10. The adoption of tools that measure the cumulative impact of regulations affecting
- 9 production agriculture and believe this measurement should be completed prior to
- 10 the implementation of any regulation impacting agriculture; and
- 11 11. Maintain a centralized electronic system for regulatory notification (“e-
- 12 notification system”) that enables interested persons to receive notices from state
- 13 agencies concerning development and drafting of rules, summaries of rule
- 14 evaluation reports, and notification of meetings regarding agency regulatory
- 15 processes.

16 We support limiting the ability to intervene in regulatory actions against landowners
 17 for environmental problems to adjoining landowners, neighbors, or those directly affected
 18 by the alleged violation.

19 We encourage more efficient and expeditious decisions regarding mandatory
 20 government permit requests to encourage growth of new and existing business entities.

21

TAXES

22

23

State and Local Taxes

481

25 To stay within the state budget, we strongly encourage our state legislators to make
 26 every effort to find cost savings measures before raising taxes.

27 The state should streamline tax collection, including personal income taxes.

28 When a government agency promulgates restrictions, we support the establishment of
 29 a tax relief and/or easement program that would provide income to landowners while
 30 allowing state agencies to implement preservation policies.

31 We support legislation to permit local governments to levy an admission tax on
 32 special events to pay for expenses of controlling and policing such events.

33 We encourage both state and national tax exemption on interest income from savings
 34 accounts and investments.

35 We support exempting capital gains from Ohio taxable income as long as the real
 36 property is held for more than five years.

37 We oppose any effort to reinstate an estate or inheritance tax at any level of
 38 government.

39 We oppose any excessive and unfair taxes. While we are opposed to gross revenue
 40 taxes (Commercial Activity Tax), we also recognize that increases in income tax rates,
 41 increases in property tax rates, loss of CAUV, and/or loss of sales tax exemptions are
 42 equally unacceptable. We also oppose any rate increases in the current Commercial
 43 Activity Tax (CAT), as well as any increases in the administrative fee. We recommend
 44 the administrative fee threshold be raised to \$500,000. We support exempting all farms
 45 from the CAT that are required to pay the Ohio Income Tax.

46 We encourage a revision to the CAT to treat all grain handlers fairly and equitably.

1 We believe in fiscal responsibility in state government. If the CAT generates revenue
2 beyond the estimated total of \$1.594 billion per biennium, we support the current
3 provision in law that places half of the excess funds into a rainy day fund and half applied
4 to an overall rate reduction.

5 We oppose all state voter referendums that propose bond issues, unless the
6 referendum includes the source of revenue needed to pay off the bond (principle and
7 interest).

8 Because of its impact on rural hospitals and access to healthcare in rural areas, we
9 oppose the taxation of hospitals and advocate repealing existing taxes.

10 Income received from fees and assessments from an agency or program shall not be
11 returned to general purpose or general revenue funds.

12 With respect to the probate administration of an estate, we support the increase of the
13 threshold to relieve an estate from full probate administration to \$70,000 for non-spouse
14 and up to \$500,000 where the surviving spouse inherits all of the assets of the estate.

15 Taxes on intrastate transmission lines should be taxed at the same rate as distribution
16 lines. Interstate transmission lines should continue to be taxed at the higher rate.

18 **CAUV and Property Taxes**

482

19 Some non-profit groups and organizations [501(c)(3)] maintain land or other property
20 that are used only for investment or money raising. If such properties are not a part of
21 their primary mission and location, we support legislation requiring them to pay property
22 taxes on those holdings. We encourage OFBF to help protect CAUV in Ohio and to
23 promote the integrity of the program by supporting the enforcement of its standards.

24 We continue to support that the land under permanent farm markets and greenhouses
25 be eligible for Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV). Eligibility should require at
26 least 50 percent owner-produced commodities. This eligibility would be consistent with
27 land under other agricultural structures. We support changing the CAUV sign-up period
28 to once every five years to coincide with the Agricultural District sign-up period.

29 We oppose any additional obligation (except in voter approved rate increases) on real
30 property taxes to fund local or any other level of government, including schools.

31 We favor maintaining the 10 percent and 2-1/2 percent property tax rollback, the rate
32 adjustment factor, the 10 mill limitation on inside millage, and the present Current
33 Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) formula. We support maintaining the minimum acreage
34 requirement to qualify for CAUV at 10 acres, or a minimum of \$2,500 gross agricultural
35 income.

36 We support the same CAUV law interpretation in all counties. We support legislation
37 giving counties the permissive authority to increase CAUV recoupment to five years,
38 with the last two years of recoupment to fund local voluntary farmland preservation
39 programs.

40 We encourage the inclusion of equine and equine activities as a qualifying use for the
41 CAUV program.

42 We support the inclusion of land using conservation practices (buffer strips, filter
43 strips, grass waterway, permanent cover crops, expiration of federal land retirement or
44 conservation program, etc.) in the CAUV program.

45 Real property tax reappraisals and triennial updates should be done in a manner that
46 accurately reflects the true value of home sites, buildings, and land. We support

1 legislation that would change the meaning of the county auditors' definition "true market
2 value" or "market value." These terms should mean the current purchase price of the
3 land, even if it is sold by auction. We encourage Farm Bureau members to review their
4 tax bills and property tax cards to determine the accuracy of the assigned value.

5 We urge the legislature to modify H.B. 920 so tax on new construction would add to
6 current receipts and not adjust existing real estate taxes.

7 We support property tax relief for landowners who use best management practices
8 along waterways.

9 We should eliminate the state's forestry tax and combine it with CAUV. CAUV
10 would then apply to forestland.

11 We support legislation that would require woodlands to have a simple forest
12 management plan to qualify for CAUV. The plans need to be written by a state, SWCD,
13 or private lands forester. We oppose the requirement of a "master logger" to harvest
14 timber as it applies to CAUV program requirements. For CAUV purposes, we request no
15 management plan be required for forest land if forest acreage is 25 percent or less of
16 property acreage.

17 We encourage that the CAUV formula be thoroughly reviewed to ensure that data
18 used in the calculation is recent, relevant, and reflective of Ohio's agricultural economy.

19 We oppose including the value of government payments or subsidies to be used in the
20 calculation of CAUV.

21 We encourage that a study be done to more accurately reflect woodland values in
22 CAUV.

23 We encourage that a study be done to determine whether the capitalization rate used
24 in the CAUV formula is accurate.

25 Tracts, lots or parcels of land where the title is held by one owner and which are
26 farmed as one farming unit should be allowed to be combined to qualify for CAUV, even
27 if the tracts, lots or parcels are located in different counties. The auditor in the county
28 where the majority of the land is located shall determine the eligibility of the land in the
29 neighboring county. The tax revenue generated by each individual parcel shall still go to
30 the county where the individual parcel is located.

31 **Public Property**

483

33 We urge that state or federal tax exempt agencies be required to pay real property tax
34 on properties from which income is being derived.

35 In order to compensate local governmental units, including school districts, for
36 revenue loss due to publicly owned land and facilities, we urge the State of Ohio to
37 consider establishing user fees, admissions, tuition, licensing, etc., to reimburse these
38 local units.

39 We support legislation that requires the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to pay
40 taxes on all land and real estate owned by the department for recreational or
41 environmental purposes. These taxes should be paid to local governmental subdivisions
42 and school districts at the same rate and value as paid by private property owners.
43

1 **Income Tax** **484**

2 Additional revenue, if needed, should come primarily from the personal income tax
3 and, under some circumstances, from an increase in sales and use tax rates, rather than
4 from eliminating exemptions.

5 We support use of the optional local school district income tax in preference to
6 property tax.

7 We support legislation to eliminate the requirement of quarterly filing for city income
8 taxes for those reporting agricultural incomes.

9 We support and encourage a change in state tax laws that will eliminate the penalty
10 for couples filing joint tax returns.

11 If land is taken by eminent domain, we support legislation that would create a state
12 income tax credit for all capital gains taxes.

13 We encourage the state legislature to increase the dollar amount for accelerated
14 depreciation for businesses and farms to match the federal tax regulations.

15 **Sales Tax** **485**

16 We support the continuation of the agricultural sales tax exemption.

17 We oppose taxes on food at the wholesale or retail levels.

18 We support the use of a statewide sales tax and/or income tax to fund education in
19 place of increases in real property tax.

20 We support the replacement of property taxes with the revenue from additional
21 statewide sales tax, thus creating a reduction in property tax.

22 We support the concept of an Internet sales tax; however current Ohio sales tax
23 exemptions should apply.

24 We support requiring that all state agencies accept “postmarked by” instead of
25 “received by” for paperwork filings.

26 We support legislation that uses the common definition of agriculture for determining
27 the sales tax exemption for all-purpose off-highway vehicles.

28 **Tax Abatements, Credits, Incentives** **486**

29 We encourage the State of Ohio to conduct a study to determine if tax abatements
30 actually pay for themselves and are a valid way to encourage business growth.

31 When tax abatements are granted for industry, there should be guidelines that require
32 the new industry to meet certain standards. We encourage tax abatements for business
33 locating on an abandoned site, rather than on prime farmland. If businesses given tax
34 abatements leave before, or immediately at the end of an abatement period, they should
35 pay a tax recoupment penalty of a high percentage of their years of agreement. The
36 government subdivision granting the tax abatement for industry should reimburse the
37 affected school district and other affected local governmental units for lost property tax
38 revenue.

39 County commissioners should have the opportunity to review all requested property
40 tax abatements.
41
42

- 1 **Motor Fuels Tax** **487**
2 We support a tax credit for the end-users of renewable fuels.
3 Ohio should reevaluate the methods utilized to fund road maintenance. Gas taxes
4 may no longer be the only answer. Any discussion should ensure equity for agricultural
5 usage.
6
- 7 **Gas Tax Refund** **488**
8 We urge Ohio to refund the annual gas tax from off road use gasoline as a tax credit
9 on the state income tax form.
10
- 11 **Motor Vehicle License and Highway Use Tax** **489**
12 We oppose the removal of front license plates on motor vehicles.
13 We urge the State of Ohio to enforce and assure compliance with the current system
14 of individual auto liability insurance coverage. The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles
15 should be required to notify an individual if his/her driver’s license is suspended. We
16 support increasing the property damage and bodily injury state minimum insurance levels
17 for mandatory auto liability insurance. Current levels are too low to cover accident
18 expenses in many cases according to today’s costs.
19 We urge that the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles require that the county name be
20 displayed at the bottom of both front and rear license plates.
21 Wagons subject to slow moving vehicle regulation should continue to be exempt from
22 licensing fees.
23 Currently, vehicle license tags cannot be transferred at the end of a lease contract
24 when the lessee purchases the vehicle. This can result in virtual double taxation for the
25 same owner/operator. A simple fee for transferring the license from the lease company to
26 the owner should be available.
27 We oppose the use of fuel and highway use taxes for any purpose other than highway
28 construction and repair.
29 We oppose the titling and licensing of farm machinery.
30 When additional state highway funds are available through an increase in the motor
31 fuel tax, an adequate portion of that tax should be allocated for rural roads and bridges.
32 We urge that the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles put the word “farm” back on farm
33 plated vehicles.
34 We support the license plates that promote agriculture, Ohio’s number one industry.
35 We encourage the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles to allow the option of renewing
36 commercial vehicle and farm truck registrations via U.S. mail and/or the internet.
37 We support a farm truck that uses a six month license to be exempt from financial
38 responsibility (insurance) during the off season.
39

SECTION 5: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

SECTION 5: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Environmental Protection

501

We will cooperate with sound programs that will lead to an improved environment. We insist environmental regulations be scientifically sound, based on credible data, practical, realistic, and economically feasible. We will support farmers who use sound management practices in their farming operations and face harassment or legal action by their neighbors or government agencies. We support those environmental laws that embrace these principles.

We believe after an investment has been made in pollution abatement equipment and facilities, and these have been approved, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio Department of Agriculture, and Natural Resources Conservation Service should not require changes in such facilities due to changing or new technology as long as the current system operates as designed and meets environmental objectives.

We believe that any liability resulting from failure of facilities due to poor design/engineering, planning or assessment should not be the responsibility of the landowner and such failure should be repaired by the responsible engineering or government agency.

We support both federal and state programs to provide grants to farmers of up to 75 percent cost-sharing plus tax incentives to farmers installing pollution abatement facilities.

We urge farmers to abide by Ohio's hazardous waste law. Information and opportunity should be provided to farmers so they can properly deal with agricultural hazardous waste.

We support the development of agricultural expertise within the Ohio EPA through the hiring of individuals with agricultural experience.

We urge farmers to remove underground fuel storage tanks. Encourage farmers to site, manage, and inspect aboveground fuel storage tanks on a routine and regular basis.

We recommend establishment of a new, more reasonable fire code category for above ground, private fueling sites with a combined tankage of 5,000 gallons or less.

Consideration should be given to proper venting, labeling and distances from important structures.

We commend the Ohio EPA for developing its new Voluntary Action Program (VAP) which allows individuals or businesses to voluntarily clean up contaminated properties so they can continue in, or be put into, productive use. We strongly urge the Ohio EPA to reduce the severity of the regulations that must be met to the bare minimum in order to encourage redevelopment on existing sites. We further recommend the use of peer review, based upon sound science, to confirm non-excessive clean up requirements.

We support member participation in programs utilizing voluntary, science-based, confidential self-assessment tools such as Farm*A*Syst, the Livestock Environmental Assurance Program (LEAP), Equine Environmental and Liability Assurance Program and the Ohio Agricultural Environmental Assurance Alliance's Environmental Self-Assessment Program.

1 We encourage continued research and the use of sound conservation practices
 2 designed to minimize the offsite transport of nutrients from the application of manure.
 3 To maintain the viability of Ohio's livestock industry, we encourage the adoption of
 4 practices suitable for application on frozen and snow-covered ground to protect surface
 5 and ground water resources.

6 We believe Ohio environmental regulations should not be more stringent than federal
 7 regulations.

8 We support the farmers' right to haul manure as long as they follow proper setbacks
 9 and guidelines in Natural Resources Conservation Service Standard #633.

10 We support the development of a law to address chronic and frivolous complaints
 11 against agricultural operations.

12 We urge that members of Ohio's congressional delegation and the Governor work to
 13 ensure that NPDES delegation authority for large livestock farms is transferred from the
 14 Ohio EPA to the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

15 We support the Ohio EPA in addressing education of their permitting process,
 16 especially in the case of their asbestos abatement permit, before a violation happens.
 17

AIR

E-check 511

18
 19
 20 We support elimination of the enhanced motor vehicle inspection and maintenance
 21 (E-check) program. Efforts to meet U.S. EPA air quality standards should emphasize
 22 state flexibility and control.
 23
 24

Acid Rain 512

25 We will work toward a reduction of undesirable products of combustion with
 26 necessary regard to economic impacts. Fuel substitution is not a permanent viable fix
 27 and could be fatal to Ohio's coal industry. We support the efforts of the Office of Coal
 28 Development, Ohio Department of Development, and the industry to commercialize the
 29 proven clean coal technology. There should be more time given for the utility industry to
 30 update generating facilities to comply with the Clean Air Act, utilizing clean coal
 31 technology.
 32

33 The cost of compliance with the Clean Air Act should be broader based. The law
 34 should:

- 35 1. Extend these costs to all the country;
- 36 2. Reduce requirements for sulfur dioxide emissions to more reasonable levels until
 37 the benefits of reduction are more adequately documented; and
- 38 3. Grandfather older power plants and establish the more stringent requirements for
 39 new construction.

40 We support the appropriation of more research money or provision of tax incentives
 41 for safe and clean use of high sulfur coal.
 42

Clean Air 513

43 The balanced implementation of the Federal Clean Air Act is important to the farmers
 44 of Ohio.
 45

1 Any state regulations developed to implement the Federal Clean Air Act and other air
 2 quality laws should be scientifically sound, based on credible data, practical, realistic and
 3 economically feasible. Regulatory action should wait for the development of proven
 4 emission measurement technology.

5 Sufficient scientifically based representative field data regarding air quality and
 6 agricultural operations does not currently exist. We support funding for, and voluntary
 7 agreements that lead to agricultural air quality research.

8 **Open Burning** **514**

9 We support the expansion of the current open burning regulations to allow for the
 10 disposal of storm damage debris and flood related drift wood during otherwise restricted
 11 dates and times and oppose any effort to restrict agricultural open burning.

12 **Outdoor Wood Fired Boilers** **515**

13 Outdoor wood fired boilers installed according to manufacturer's recommendations
 14 and applicable state and local codes should be grandfathered and exempted from any new
 15 requirements established for new installations. We are opposed to new state regulations
 16 pertaining to outdoor wood fired boilers and any rule making should be postponed to
 17 allow enough time for the existing federal voluntary program to succeed.

18 **LAND**

19 **Bio-Solids** **521**

20 We support cooperation among applicators, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency,
 21 municipalities and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to assure proper and safe
 22 application of bio-solids.

23 The same nutrient levels that apply in the application of agricultural nutrients to
 24 farmland should apply to bio-solid application. We encourage farmers to utilize Best
 25 Management Practices for the application and use of bio-solids, which includes obtaining
 26 a complete chemical analysis performed by a qualified laboratory, of the bio-solids being
 27 applied, including, but not limited to heavy metals, organics, and pathogens.

28 Bio-solid generators must be held accountable for damages occurring from inaccurate
 29 chemical analysis of heavy metals, dioxins, or other toxins. Damages resulting from
 30 misapplication are the responsibility of the applicator.

31 We urge the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and OARDC to conduct research
 32 on efficient land application of bio-solids to strip-mine reclamation projects to avoid
 33 polluting our soil and water. We are against the indiscriminate spreading of bio-solids on
 34 any land. All bio-solids used on land should continue to be sampled and analyzed for
 35 metals, organics, and pathogens by a qualified laboratory.

36 **Hazardous and Solid Waste Disposal** **522**

37 We support legislation to remove the veto power vested in the legislative authority of
 38 the largest municipality of each county within a solid waste management district.
 39 Ratification of the solid waste management plan, as prepared by the solid waste policy
 40 committee, would be solely and strictly contingent upon determining that a sufficient
 41 number of legislative authorities have approved the plan.

1 The location of solid waste and hazardous waste facility sites should adequately
2 protect groundwater.

3 We encourage the Ohio Legislature to enact laws strengthening Ohio's landfill laws
4 to better protect Ohio's rural environment.

5 We recommend the establishment of regional recycling centers financed by all the
6 units of government in that region.

7 We support efforts aimed at reclaiming and recycling solid and hazardous wastes
8 through energy generators, waste exchangers, and other types of energy conversion.

9 We encourage the use of agriculturally based biodegradable packaging products.

10 We urge proper enforcement of present regulations concerning the transportation and
11 handling of hazardous material to ensure proper response in event of accidents.

12 Whenever possible, hazardous waste should be neutralized at the site of production
13 before being transported.

14 We encourage farmers to strictly follow all recommended methods of disposal of all
15 agricultural chemical containers.

16 We request a full time inspector at all waste facilities during business hours.

17 A special fund should be established to provide for clean-up of hazardous waste
18 dumping when the violator is not known and the landowner has no control or
19 responsibility for the illegal dumping.

20 We encourage the further development and expansion of compost technologies for
21 household and yard wastes.

22 We support the continuation of the state-wide moratorium on construction debris and
23 demolition (CD&D) landfills until adequate rules and regulations are in place to protect
24 the environment. Loads going into and out of transfer stations must remain identifiable.

25 **Household Sewage Treatment**

523

26 To protect the quality of our water resources and the health of rural residents, we:

- 27 1. Believe it is the responsibility of rural homeowners to ensure that their home
28 sewage treatment systems are managed and operated correctly and encourage
29 them to follow a routine and regular inspection program;
- 30 2. Urge rural homeowners to work with their local board of health to address any
31 identified needs associated with the proper operation and maintenance of their
32 home sewage treatment system;
- 33 3. Encourage alternative funding mechanisms, including but not limited to cost
34 sharing and low interest loans, be made available to rural homeowners to upgrade,
35 repair or replace existing nonfunctional home sewage treatment systems;
- 36 4. Believe that individuals who are trained in soil analysis, such as Soil and Water
37 Conservation District (SWCD) and Natural Resources Conservation Service
38 (NRCS), should have the authority to identify the soil types that will not be
39 appropriate for traditional home sewage treatment systems;
- 40 5. Support providing the Director of Health and the local boards of health the
41 authority to assign a level of risk (low, moderate, high) to each site based on lot
42 size and soil conditions. The assigned level of risk is to determine the appropriate
43 sewage treatment system(s) for the site.
- 44 6. Support the installation of nontraditional home sewage treatment systems when
45 site conditions are not appropriate for traditional systems;
- 46

- 1 7. Support a uniform inspection standard that is fair to all homeowners that utilize a
- 2 home sewage treatment system;
- 3 8. Support the proper and safe disposal of septage; and
- 4 9. Homeowners should not be required to abandon their private sewage treatment
- 5 system and connect to a public sewage system when it becomes accessible to the
- 6 property, if the private sewage system is inspected and approved by a qualified
- 7 inspector.

8

9 **Waste Disposal and Recycling** **524**

10 We support a comprehensive litter and solid waste control law that includes, but is

11 not limited to the following provisions:

- 12 1. A deposit on beverage cans and bottles. This deposit should be high enough to
- 13 provide an incentive for their return;
- 14 2. Adequate redemption and recycling opportunities for rural areas;
- 15 3. An incentive for manufacturers selling in Ohio to easily make recyclable
- 16 products;
- 17 4. Incentives for private industry to collect and recycle recyclable materials;
- 18 5. A financial incentive for local non-profit groups to pick up litter along highways
- 19 outside of incorporated areas;
- 20 6. An incentive to develop and use biodegradable packaging and trash bags; and
- 21 7. Research into using recycled tires.

22 Should waste of any type be deposited on a landowner’s property unknown to the

23 landowner, its removal and disposal should become the responsibility of the county litter

24 agency, or other appropriate agency.

25 We urge the Ohio Division of Litter Prevention and Recycling to continue its

26 commendable effort to control litter and solid waste in rural areas.

27 Litter prevention and recycling education should be a part of Ohio’s effort in

28 controlling solid waste.

29 We urge the continued research and development of economically feasible

30 composting programs that benefit the urban community and agriculture. This should

31 include, but not be limited to:

- 32 1. What products can be composted;
- 33 2. The nutrient value of compost; and
- 34 3. The economic value of composting.

35 We encourage utilization of composting on agricultural operations and promote

36 enhanced access to cost share funds for implementation and operation of composting

37 facilities.

38 We encourage local units of government to investigate and establish centralized

39 collection points for household hazardous waste and items to be recycled.

40 We support an increase in the agricultural exemption for tires on the storage

41 regulations that apply to feed storage (silo bunkers). The tires used for this purpose

42 should be cut in half so as not to retain water.

43 We support a civil remedy against dealers in scrap metal who purchase large amounts

44 of metals under circumstances where the purchaser knows, or should know, that the metal

45 is stolen.

WATER

Nonpoint Source Pollution

531

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Ohio State University Extension are developing various programs to reduce soil loss and nonpoint source pollution from agriculture run-off and from disposal of agricultural wastes. We support these programs and encourage the state to provide adequate funds for agriculture pollution abatement. We will also work with these agencies, and others involved to develop waste management and handling guidelines in order to protect farmers and processors from unreasonable and/or inconsistent regulations.

We recognize that Ohio's water resources are valuable to the State of Ohio and as such, we expect farmers to use environmental management systems to protect and improve water quality (such as but not limited to filter strips, grass waterways, wetlands and cover crops).

Monies made available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the general revenue fund of Ohio should be promptly passed through and applied to the implementation of soil and water conservation efforts on the land. This action has proven to be the most effective method of reducing the phosphorus loading in Lake Erie and the reduction of agriculture pollution of streams and rivers, as well as reducing costs of sediment removal in agriculture areas. We support state government contribution to, and further expansion of federal cost share programs.

We believe that whenever possible, all individuals disturbing the land surface should follow recommendations set by the Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC Program), Soil and Water Conservation Districts and local NRCS soil technicians.

We encourage all those (including non-agricultural) applying nutrients and crop protectant products to follow recognized management practices including the development of nutrient management plans with soil testing.

Watershed Management

532

As responsible stewards of our land, water and air resources, we:

1. Support continued efforts of the OFBF water quality initiative and the OFBF Strategic Vision for Water Quality;
2. Support member participation in established local watershed groups;
3. Encourage members to assess and evaluate their local water resources;
4. Encourage members to lead in the formation of local watershed groups;
5. Support adequate funding of local watershed groups for the development and implementation of watershed management plans;
6. Encourage local political jurisdictions to partner in the development and implementation of watershed management plans;
7. Support and encourage member involvement in the local implementation of state water quality initiatives such as the Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) Program and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program;

- 1 8. Support the use of scientifically based and economically sound conservation
- 2 practices to protect surface and ground water resources that are delivered in a
- 3 flexible and voluntary manner;
- 4 9. Support the watershed specialists in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- 5 and the Ohio State University Extension in the implementation of the Watershed
- 6 Action Agenda;
- 7 10. Support a state income tax credit for water quality improvement projects;
- 8 10. Support monitoring the licensing and enforcement of Ohio public water systems
- 9 for agricultural, horticultural and related operations and assisting affected
- 10 members with compliance; and
- 11 11. We urge continued support of North Appalachia Experimental Watershed station
- 12 in Coshocton County.
- 13

14 **Conservation and Market-Based Incentives** **533**

15 Improving the environment by enhancing the conservation, wise use and productivity
16 of our natural resources through private ownership, individual freedom and market-
17 oriented approaches is our most important conservation and environmental goal.

18 We believe:

- 19 1. Pollution permit trading is a viable approach to implement the requirements of the
- 20 Federal Clean Water Act and Federal Clean Air Act.
- 21 2. The United States Environmental Protection Agency should outline the general
- 22 guidelines of pollution permit trading but allow local entities to determine the
- 23 management system which best fits its needs.

24 We support:

- 25 1. Compensation at fair market value for environmental or regulatory costs that
- 26 contribute to the public good.
- 27 2. The development, promotion and education of farmers about market-based
- 28 incentive programs, such as nutrient and carbon credit trading as alternatives to
- 29 government prescriptions.
- 30

31 **Nutrient Management** **534**

32 As a core function of agricultural production, application of lime, fertilizer and other
33 nutrient inputs should not require a permit for the farmer.

34 We expect all farm operations regardless of size to complete and follow a
35 comprehensive nutrient management plan.

36 We support legislation that provides a safe harbor for farmers who follow industry
37 accepted practices for nutrient management.

38 We support requiring a custom manure license issued by the Ohio Department of
39 Agriculture (ODA) for custom application of manure. The custom applicator should
40 assume all responsibility in regard to correct transportation and application of the
41 manure.

42 Nutrients derived from plant waste and animal manure have value, and as such should
43 be recognized as a commodity.

44 We encourage livestock operations regardless of size to use science-based best
45 management practices when applying nutrients and manure.

1 We support the Department of Agriculture’s Livestock Environmental Permitting
 2 Program to adopt reasonable, economically viable, scientifically based rules related to its
 3 certified livestock manager (CLM) program. This would include, but not be limited to,
 4 requiring a chain of responsibility regarding correct transportation, application and
 5 monitoring of nutrients from livestock facilities.

7 **Watercourse Differentiation**

535

8 We encourage the adoption of definitions to differentiate the types of watercourses
 9 found in a watershed based on the following concepts.

- 10 1. Ohio Environmental Protection Agency should designate water courses based on
 11 their numerical scores (ICI), fish (IBI) and habitat (QHEI) at the time of testing
 12 and not on a perceived improvement potential.
- 13 2. Due to confusion caused by labeling all watercourses as streams, we believe
 14 definitions should be adopted to differentiate the types of watercourses found in a
 15 watershed. Some examples are the following:
 - 16 a. Watercourse-Any concentrated flow of water.
 - 17 b. Stream-A watercourse that existed historically and has a steady flow of water.
 - 18 c. Modified Stream-A watercourse that existed historically, has a steady flow of
 19 water but has been altered by man at some time in the past to better serve
 20 other uses.
 - 21 d. Channel-A watercourse that existed historically and has periods of
 22 intermittent or no water flow.
 - 23 e. Modified Channel - A watercourse that existed historically, has periods of
 24 intermittent or no water flow, but has been altered by man at some time in the
 25 past to better serve other uses.
 - 26 f. Man-Made Channel-A watercourse that did not exist historically and has
 27 periods of intermittent or no water flow (also known as a Ditch).
 - 28 g. Maintained Man-Made Channel-A watercourse that did not exist historically,
 29 has periods of intermittent or no water flow and is maintained under an
 30 authorized government program.
- 31 3. The “LRW or limited resource water” designation used by the Ohio
 32 Environmental Protection Agency has a three (3) square mile or less drainage area
 33 requirement, which should be removed. Many man-made and maintained man-
 34 made channels have drainage areas over (3) square miles with intermittent or no
 35 flow periods, but are given designations higher than LRW because of drainage
 36 area.
- 37 4. IBI (fish) and ICI (bug) scores should not apply to watercourses with intermittent
 38 or no water flow.

39 We support a new use designation by Ohio EPA for agricultural drainage ditches that
 40 protects their use and maintenance for removal of excess water. They should not be
 41 assigned recreational uses.

43 **Stormwater District**

536

44 We support legislation allowing the formation of Stormwater Districts under the
 45 jurisdiction of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to solve drainage problems in areas
 46 where the ditch law is not effective. Such a law should permit:

- 1 1. County commissioners, municipalities or township trustees to initiate action to
- 2 establish such a district;
- 3 2. District board control of stormwater management;
- 4 3. District taxing authority;
- 5 4. Collection of user fees;
- 6 5. Protection of agriculture from unfair assessment;
- 7 6. Districts to follow watershed boundaries not political boundaries; and
- 8 7. Fees and assessments collected shall be commensurate with services provided.

9 Adequate credit shall be given for absorption capacity and water management
 10 practices on agricultural lands when Storm Water Phase II assessments are established.
 11 Assessments should not be placed on a per area, per average impervious surface unit (e.g.
 12 equivalent residential unit), or any other basis that would place an undue burden on
 13 agriculture.

14

Water**537**

16 Ohio's groundwater is a valuable resource. Ohio currently operates under a
 17 reasonable use standard. Farm Bureau will continue to consider groundwater rights
 18 legislation.

19 If the pumping or sale of groundwater by a public or private water company adversely
 20 affects private water supplies, the company responsible should provide water by a tap-in
 21 to a water line or a new well at no cost to the affected party.

22 We recognize the need of major metropolitan cities to obtain an adequate and safe
 23 supply of water. We recommend that any and all studies of water supply alternatives
 24 should present proposals which have the least negative impact on our natural resources,
 25 and the least socio-economic impact on agriculture, especially the taking of prime
 26 farmland. We believe governments should address:

- 27 1. Increasing their water conservation practices;
- 28 2. Water reuse and recycling potential;
- 29 3. Current water line losses;
- 30 4. Economics as a basis for water conservation (i.e., ascending block water rates);
- 31 5. The socio-economic impact on surrounding communities;
- 32 6. The right to use water as a property right which should not be taken from an
 33 owner without due process of law and just compensation; and
- 34 7. Local community's right to use an organized regional water planning concept to
 35 provide water for all communities in the region.

36 We support equal consideration and priority for rural and urban water use and the
 37 continuation of monitoring the licensing and enforcement of Ohio public water systems
 38 for agricultural operations and assisting affected members with compliance.

39 We believe the authority to monitor drinking water sources for pesticides and nitrates
 40 belong with the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

41 We support the use of Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce the potential
 42 impact of pesticide and nutrient contamination of ground and surface water.

43 The disposal of wash water from produce grown and harvested following pesticide
 44 label directions should not be regulated.

45 We encourage agricultural input in establishing preventative measures if pollution
 46 levels exceed EPA standards, based on a rolling annual average.

1 We will oppose wellhead protection legislation that:

- 2 1. Requires private well owners to test for any contaminates other than Coliform
- 3 bacteria;
- 4 2. Regulates the use of pesticides or fertilizers on fields under cultivation; or
- 5 3. Charges farmers new fees for any purpose related to well head protection.

6 We are supportive of efforts to prevent contamination of surface and ground water
7 supplies from solid waste and hazardous waste landfills, leaking underground storage
8 tanks, salt brine disposal, or any other activities that may endanger the ground water
9 supply.

10 We support a well distance regulation on new housing which would force developers
11 to place wells at least 100 feet from property lines adjacent to agriculturally zoned land.

12 We support legislation that relieves farmers from liability for water contamination
13 when approved farming methods are used and label directions are followed while using
14 crop protection chemicals.

15 We support the education of surface users, urban and agricultural; to adequately
16 protect ground water supplies.

17 We support funding of a Watershed Specialist under the supervision of the local Soil
18 and Water Conservation Districts. We support funding for watershed assessment and
19 monitoring to be conducted by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. We support
20 the efforts of the Water Resources Council.

21 We encourage the state to maintain their reservoirs, retain ownership and not turn
22 them over to the local village or township.

23 We encourage farmers to begin recording water usage for all enterprises in order to be
24 prepared for future legislation concerning provisional water rights to ground water.

25 **Out-of-Basin Transfer of Water**

538

27 Fresh water is increasingly being recognized as a valuable natural resource.
28 Protecting Ohio's water basins from withdrawals to other regions of North America is
29 necessary to maintain healthy ecosystems.

30 We believe:

- 31 1. Water used for food and fiber production and/or products is in the public interest,
32 is a reasonable use of water and should not be considered a diversion;
- 33 2. Ohio agriculture maintains open spaces for aquifer recharge and preserves
34 wildlife habitat; and
- 35 3. Regulation of agricultural water use is not necessary to protect, conserve, restore
36 and improve the waters and water dependent natural resources of Ohio.

37 We support:

- 38 1. Efforts which will provide a high priority status to agricultural water use;
- 39 2. Research and education to increase the efficiency of agricultural water use; and
- 40 3. The development of a study of agricultural water use in Ohio and associated
41 ecological benefits.

42 We oppose:

- 43 1. The expansion of Ohio's Water Withdrawal Facility Registration Program into a
44 water use-permitting program;
- 45 2. Legislation that would adversely affect Ohio agriculture; and

1 management, ownership or for future purchased land. These plans should include, for
2 example, identification of funds for development or maintenance of the land; a wildlife
3 management plan; and identification of noxious weed and mosquito controls.

4 We believe when declaring a piece of land a wetland appropriate compensation for
5 the landowner should be made either through tax forgiveness, purchase at the option of
6 the owner, payment for wildlife habitat, or other means acceptable to the landowner. We
7 support the use of income tax credit for enhancement or development of wetlands.

8 We oppose legislation to change the designation of any state forest to that of state
9 park. We support the use of Best Management Practices based on recommendations of
10 our state foresters, as opposed to recommendations proposed by an advisory council.

11 **Oil and Gas**

542

13 We encourage all property owners to obtain appropriate information and advice prior
14 to entering into oil and gas leases.

15 We support legislation, which will require oil and gas companies that purchase oil
16 and gas to pay landowners directly for their share of oil and gas produced.

17 Landowners should not be charged for transportation of oil and gas through producer
18 owned lines.

19 We support drilling for oil and natural gas on public lands.

20 We support compensation for land owners without mineral rights that have collection
21 lines or other oil and gas collection infrastructure on their property.

22 Landowners should have access to producer owned gas meters. The landowner
23 should also have the right to check the orifice plate with the chart. To assist the
24 landowner in understanding the meter and the production through it, the producing
25 company should supply the landowner with a master list to assist in reading the chart.
26 We urge oil and gas producers to use readable meters that can be more easily understood
27 by royalty owners. We support a meter inspection program to assure correct metering of
28 natural gas.

29 We recommend that the law be changed for restoration of oil and gas well sites to
30 permit the Chief of the Division of Mineral Resources Management to promulgate rules
31 that will provide for a sod cover, restore productive capacity, and prevent erosion around
32 well sites and on access roads during the productive life of the well and after the well is
33 plugged and abandoned. We urge the Division of Mineral Resources Management to
34 uniformly enforce plugging regulations. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts
35 should be given authority to approve the location of access roads and to supervise
36 reclamation of well sites and access roads by approving a conservation plan for the area
37 prior to a permit being issued. A portion of the permit fees should go back to the local
38 Soil and Water Conservation District office.

39 The laws and regulations dealing with the unitizing of land areas on which oil and gas
40 wells will be drilled need to be reviewed to make certain the landowner understands the
41 unitizing plan before signing a lease. We further support limiting unitization to a surface
42 area equivalent to the subsurface area from which oil and gas could be extracted. This
43 would prevent land being pooled for the sole purpose of holding a land area for the
44 producer without the delay rental being paid.

1 We support lease agreements that return to the landowner the acreage in a lease or
2 provide delay rental for those drilling units or oil bearing formations that are not drilled
3 or produced in an agreed time.

4 Oil and gas companies not owning land upon which wells are located should be
5 required by law to furnish a cash bond to assure the payment for any damages to the
6 farm.

7 Oil and gas producers should be required to maintain oil and gas well sites by
8 mowing vegetation and painting equipment and tanks. All lines should be buried below
9 the frost line.

10 We support requiring companies to cap non-productive, non-operating wells and
11 forfeit the leasehold back to the landowner.

12 We support the county recorder’s using only one assignment per instrument number
13 for oil and gas leases.

14 We support legislation that gives the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division
15 of Mineral Resources Management the authority to enforce complaints concerning the
16 care, maintenance and upkeep of gas well “feeder lines” and assist in capping orphaned
17 oil or gas wells.

18 We urge the adoption of pipeline construction, repair and remediation standards
19 recommended by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts as the
20 standard for land reclamation after construction.

21 We oppose the policy of oil and gas well permits being denied in townships where
22 coal has been owned or leased but not mined.

23
24 **Soil and Water Conservation Districts** **543**

25 We strongly support the concept of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)
26 and their purpose of encouraging proper soil, water and other natural resource
27 management and the promotion of economic and social development of the state.
28 However, SWCDs must undergo a transformation to ensure their long-term sustainability
29 and adherence to this purpose. As part of this transformation, SWCDs should:

- 30 1. Define their core purpose and increase their emphasis on the conservation of soil,
31 water and related resources;
- 32 2. Establish the ability to direct SWCD programs and services on appropriate
33 geographical boundaries to address the identified resource needs while retaining a
34 program presence in each county;
- 35 3. Develop a funding and program delivery model that provides the flexibility to
36 adjust to changes in local and state financial support;
- 37 4. Pursue increased collaboration and the sharing of services across all levels of
38 government.

39 We encourage more farmer participation and involvement on SWCD boards.

40
41 **Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers and Creeks** **544**

42 We urge the Department of Natural Resources to be very selective and to proceed
43 very slowly in its program of designating additional wild, scenic and recreational rivers.
44 Before any river is designated, the department should be in a position to enforce the
45 trespassing laws on private property. The use of eminent domain for the purpose of
46 gaining public access to such rivers and creeks should rarely be applied.

1 We urge farmers to volunteer to serve and to take an active part on scenic river
2 advisory boards.

3 If the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is considering designating any stream as
4 a scenic river, landowners along the stream should be notified by mail of this procedure.

5 We believe farmers have a right to remedy drainage problems along scenic rivers if
6 the river adversely affects cropland.

8 **MINERAL DEVELOPMENT**

10 **Longwall Mining**

551

11 We support a longwall mining policy which:

- 12 1. Requires bonding to cover surface and sub-surface damages to structures and
13 infrastructures;
- 14 2. Requires mining companies to take steps to keep all residences, agricultural
15 buildings, land and equipment functional and structurally safe during and
16 following mining;
- 17 3. Requires mining companies to return all land, buildings, and equipment to pre-
18 mining conditions using a contractor of the landowner's choice;
- 19 4. Requires water restoration to pre-mining quantities and quality;
- 20 5. Adequately compensates landowners for inconvenience and lost use;
- 21 6. Provides state regulations or laws to have homes tested for radon, before
22 underground mining as well as during and after mining;
- 23 7. Pays the landowner for those coal seams that the coal company does not own and
24 that are destroyed by their mining operation; and
- 25 8. Opposes longwall mining under National Landmarks and property eligible for, or
26 listed to, the National Register of Historic Places.

27 We support the Ohio EPA continuing to regulate slurry ponds at mining operations.

28 Any landowner with a producing oil or gas well shall be compensated for any and all
29 losses or damages incurred due to longwall mining. A plan shall be submitted to the
30 Ohio Department of Natural Resources validating the true economic reason it should be
31 longwall mined instead of block and pillared.

32 We urge the Department of Natural Resources to develop a brochure explaining the
33 impacts of longwall mining on surface owners. The brochure should include the rights a
34 landowner has to compensation for damages and water replacement.

35 Coal companies not owning land, upon which longwall and underground mines are
36 located, should be required by law to furnish a cash bond to ensure the payment for any
37 surface or subsurface damages to the property, structures or infrastructures.

38 We encourage research to determine the economic loss of coal resources above the
39 Pittsburgh #8 coal seam due to longwall mining.

41 **Reclamation of Strip Mined Land**

552

42 We recommend that state and/or federal reclamation laws be amended so that lands
43 important to the agricultural economy of eastern Ohio, but not necessarily meeting the
44 current definition of prime farmland, can be reclaimed with sufficient subsoil layers in
45 addition to the currently required restoration of topsoil.

1 We urge a change in the reclamation law to permit more gentle slopes when it would
2 be better than returning the slope to within five degrees of the original. We are opposed
3 to increasing the grade to more than a one-degree increase from the original.

4 We oppose the method of end dumping as an approved method of mine reclamation.

5 We will work to effect change in the federal and state reclamation laws to allow coal
6 companies to gain complete bond release on reclaimed land no longer than three years
7 following the meeting of reclamation standards.

8 We support the concept of federal legislation to extend the severance tax on coal for
9 the purpose of reclaiming abandoned mine lands. Such severance taxes should be fully
10 allocated to strip mine reclamation programs. As an alternative to federal legislation, we
11 support a state severance tax in a like amount to be used for reclamation of abandoned
12 mine lands. We encourage more timely evaluation of forage yield on reclaimed lands so
13 as not to impede the harvest of quality forage.

14 We support concerned farmers to become involved in helping to establish a realistic
15 method of obtaining pre-mining and post mining crop yield data on surface mined land.
16 We also urge the establishment of more realistic crop yield levels for obtaining bond
17 release. Both of these changes in statute and rule would enable farmer-owners to gain
18 earlier control of their land.

19 We support an expanded program of planting trees in stripmine reclamation as long
20 as current standards for soil replacement and water quality are maintained and as long as
21 farmers have the right to dictate reclamation of their land for cropping, forestry or
22 grazing.

23 We support ODNR Division of Mineral Resource Management applying the
24 Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative in strip mine reclamation as long as it has
25 the support of the landowner.

26 We encourage demonstration projects on converting unreclaimed stripmine land for
27 agricultural use.

28 Funding from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund should be restored to 100
29 percent in order to implement reclamation as authorized by the Surface Mining Control
30 and Reclamation Act (P.L. 95-87.)

31 We urge the Ohio Department of Reclamation to collect bonds high enough to
32 reclaim stripmined lands in the event coal companies go bankrupt.

33 We support research on and encourage use of coal combustion by-products.

34

35 **Landowners Rights in Mineral Development**

553

36 We support legislation that will protect the rights and interests of landowners who are
37 affected by industrial mineral operations. Such legislation should allow for public
38 comment in the area affected by such mineral operations and assure that hydrologic
39 damage issues are addressed before a permit is granted.

40 We support legislation that will protect the rights and interests of landowners by
41 assuring that all mineral separation deeds are recorded promptly within 10 days to the
42 landowner's real estate deed in order to be valid.

43 We support legislation requiring coal strip mine owner/operators to supplement their
44 surface damage indemnification to the landowner when strip mining is conducted 25
45 years or more after the original purchase of coal to reflect the value of the surface damage
46 at the time of mining.

1 Oil and gas permits issued before coal mining permits should supersede the coal
 2 mining. The mining company should be required to compensate landowners for their loss
 3 or drill a new oil and gas well.

4 We support legislation that provides ownership of coal bed methane to the surface
 5 landowner.
 6

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Endangered Species 561

10 Species thriving in another state should not be listed as endangered or threatened in
 11 Ohio.

12 Land use should not be restricted based on the presence of an endangered species, or
 13 its habitat, without proper compensation to the landowner.
 14

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping 562

16 We encourage those landowners that oppose Sunday hunting to exercise their right to
 17 prohibit hunting on their property. When future wildlife regulations are developed we
 18 suggest the Ohio Division of Wildlife consider the following:

- 19 1. Crop damage;
- 20 2. Wildlife population;
- 21 3. Private property rights and input from landowners; and
- 22 4. Highway safety.

23 We will work toward a program that will provide a practical means for landowners to
 24 lease their land for hunting privileges and will support legislation that limits liability for
 25 landowners.

26 Ohio's Recreational User Statute should be expanded to protect landowners that
 27 permit hunters on their property from liability for injuries or damages caused by the
 28 hunters.

29 We urge the Division of Wildlife to schedule fish and game hearings for smaller
 30 geographical areas and to hold at least one meeting on a day other than Sunday.

31 We encourage stronger enforcement of game laws (i.e., shooting across or from a
 32 road and poaching) with mandatory fines and/or sentences.

33 We oppose any further restrictions of current trapping methods.

34 We encourage landowners to allow hunting and trapping on their property to help in
 35 the control of wildlife populations.

36 We support the reinstatement of hunting license display on the backs of all hunters
 37 that are required to have a license.

38 We encourage the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife to
 39 work with public and private landowners to develop and increase public hunting access
 40 areas in metropolitan and urbanized areas.

41 We encourage the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to increase efforts to
 42 promote the sport of hunting with Ohio's young people.

43 We support a constitutional amendment that insures the right to hunt, trap and fish in
 44 the State of Ohio.

45 We oppose the elimination of commercial fishing.

1 We encourage landowners to give permission for hunters to follow wounded game
2 onto their property. We believe landowners should be allowed to hunt on their own land
3 without permits and also their children, grandchildren, siblings and parents to have the
4 same reciprocal access.

5 We support the new automated game check system and recommend that landowners
6 and registered hunters have consistent access for registering harvested animals.

7
8 **Wildlife Introduction** **563**

9 We encourage the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to work with landowners
10 and hold at least one public hearing in proposed areas of native wildlife introduction.

11 We encourage that before the Ohio Department of Natural Resources or other agency
12 introduces a new plant or animal species as wildlife, or as predator, plans for monitoring
13 and control must be in place.

14 We oppose the reintroduction of predators into Ohio i.e. wolves, bobcats, cougars,
15 bears, and poisonous snakes.

16 We encourage the Division of Wildlife to limit the relocation of wildlife in and
17 around the state of Ohio.

18
19 **Wildlife Violations** **564**

20 We support the enforcement of wildlife laws and the establishment of criminal
21 penalties. We are opposed to civil penalties that make unreasonable charges for fish and
22 animal loss due to accidental kills.

23
24 **Wildlife Control** **565**

25 We encourage farmers to contact their wildlife officer or wildlife specialists to report
26 damage. We also encourage farmers to maintain good relationships with wildlife officers
27 and wildlife specialists to help solve wildlife problems.

28 We encourage all active members to seek and use permits from the Ohio Department
29 of Natural Resources to control damage from wildlife on their property.

30 We urge the Division of Wildlife to make depredation permits with fewer restrictions
31 more available to farmers experiencing damage year round.

32 We encourage the development of wildlife habitat on private property that will reduce
33 the need to purchase land for state development of habitat.

34 We encourage communication and cooperation between property owners and the
35 Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife, for the purpose of wildlife
36 control.

37 There is a need for both the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Ohio
38 Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to focus on wildlife damage in the state. We
39 recommend the establishment of a wildlife animal damage control advisory committee.
40 The committee should be comprised of a representative of the ODA, the ODNR, Ohio
41 State University Extension wildlife specialist, and an appropriate number of farmers and
42 sportsmen.

43 We encourage the development of technology and/or changes in regulations that will
44 allow for the elimination of nuisance burrowing wildlife.

45 The Ohio Department of Natural Resources should conduct a land use analysis prior
46 to the purchase of land for wildlife use.

1 We support the continuation of the wildlife specialist program in cooperation with
2 soil and water conservation districts with at least a 50 percent annual match for the
3 wildlife specialist.

4 We require that ODNR officers have probable cause before entering private property.

5
6 **Animal Damage Control and Wildlife Damage Fund** **566**

7 We support additional animal damage control personnel to assist farmers in reducing
8 damage. The Ohio Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture
9 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) should expand their cooperative
10 agreement to improve services to farmers. We recommend that the ODNR notify local
11 residents if they plan to release new species of animals or plants in their area.

12 We oppose the relocation of nuisance wildlife into the rural area. We support the
13 discretionary euthanasia of nuisance wildlife when trapped by a licensed nuisance
14 wildlife trapper.

15 We support research and the utilization of wildlife population control methods in
16 addition to hunting and trapping.

17 We will oppose the establishment of a hunter habitat stamp, the revenue from which
18 would be used to purchase land for hunting opportunities. We support such a program to
19 lease private land or compensate farmers for maintaining wildlife habitats.

20 We support the establishment of a cost-shared wildlife damage abatement program,
21 which includes labor, funded through a combination of license fees, hunting fines and
22 general revenue funds to account for wildlife related losses, including livestock disease
23 such as Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD).

24 We fully support an amendment to Ohio's Public Records Law that would prevent the
25 release of confidential information, such as name, address, etc. of farmers who participate
26 in lethal predator control programs.

27
28 **Crop Damaging Birds and Animals** **567**

29 We urge the Ohio Division of Wildlife to take a more active role in helping reduce
30 the population of blackbirds and other crop damaging birds and animals. We will support
31 efforts to establish a year round open season on crows to reduce the overpopulation in
32 Ohio.

33 We support a research project that will compare wildlife damage to crops (including
34 hay) to controlled crop areas. We encourage more liberal distribution of wildlife
35 nuisance permits by the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

36 We encourage expanding the labeled use of current avian repellents to include wild
37 turkey.

38 We encourage agribusiness personnel to assist farmers in identifying wildlife damage.

39
40 **Geese** **568**

41 We strongly urge the Division of Wildlife to take steps to control the goose
42 population in problem areas until it is no longer an economic problem for agriculture.
43 Furthermore, we encourage the State of Ohio to petition the federal government to
44 remove Canadian Geese from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916.

45 We condemn the practice of abandoning wild geese previously relocated for a
46 Division of Wildlife goose preserve in Ohio. If geese feeding programs or preserves are

1 abandoned, the Division of Wildlife should be required to remove/relocate these geese
2 populations.

3 We support a yearlong statewide resident nuisance goose season and increased bag
4 limits.

5
6 **Turkey** **569**

7 We encourage the Division of Wildlife to continue a fall wild turkey season, allow a
8 hunter to be able to take two birds per permit, and allow the taking of hens in areas where
9 turkeys are a problem. Establish a turkey hunting permit that can be used for the spring
10 or fall season.

11 We oppose the stocking of wild turkeys in areas currently unpopulated by wild
12 turkey.

13
14 **Beaver** **570**

15 Because of damage caused by an increase in beaver population, we recommend the
16 Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife develop better methods of control.

17
18 **Coyote** **571**

19 We urge approval for “livestock protection collars, M-44 bait stations” and collarum
20 snare for coyote control in the state of Ohio. We recommend that Ohio Farm Bureau
21 continue to work with the Ohio Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of
22 Agriculture, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the Ohio General Assembly in
23 protecting Ohio’s flocks and herds from coyote and coydog depredation.

24 We support a permanent state indemnity fund to reimburse farmers at replacement
25 cost levels for livestock kills by coyotes and coydogs. This fund should be administered
26 through the Ohio Department of Agriculture. If the fund is depleted before the year’s
27 end, reimbursement should be made from the following year’s budget.

28
29 **Deer** **572**

30 We urge Ohio farmers and sportsmen to cooperate in an effort to hunt in Ohio and
31 thus help reduce the state’s overpopulation of deer. Great economic damage is being
32 done to crops in Ohio and an undue highway safety hazard exists due to increasing
33 numbers of deer. It is obvious that there are too many deer in Ohio. The Division of
34 Wildlife should go on an aggressive campaign to reduce the number of deer. The
35 Division of Wildlife should:

- 36 1. Encourage research on repellents that would give growers additional protection;
- 37 2. Allow hunters in overpopulated deer areas to take seven deer, six of which must
38 be antlerless;
- 39 3. Expand the early primitive weapon season for deer to include increased hunting
40 areas, later dates to accommodate crop harvest, and increase number of days;
- 41 4. Decrease the cost of deer permits and successive permits for deer should not
42 require additional fees;
- 43 5. Make nuisance permits more available and consistent across all counties, and
44 make improvements by removing the restriction that hunters must live in the
45 county or contiguous county; making the permits available to control the damage

- 1 prior to the damage being severe; and making the number of permits available to a
- 2 landowner commensurate with the damage incurred and land acreage affected;
- 3 6. Exclude agricultural crop land as a component in the equation determining deer
- 4 range carrying capacity;
- 5 7. Establish a target population level on a county-by-county basis and allow deer to
- 6 be harvested until that number is achieved;
- 7 8. Allow bow hunters to hunt an additional one-half hour in the evening; and
- 8 9. Expand the Turn in a Poacher, Inc. (TIP) program to include more educational
- 9 television spot commercials encouraging hunting with permission.

10 We encourage the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife to use
 11 a two tier license which would set hunting tag fees; for example, antler (buck) tag \$40;
 12 antlerless deer tag, \$5.

13 We support the reintroduction of in-season nuisance permits for does.

14 We support a regulated bow-hunting season within the state and metro park systems.

15 The term “deer” as it pertains to the Division of Wildlife should be defined as wild
 16 white tail deer.

17 We support any legislation in conjunction with the Division of Wildlife to allow the
 18 first day of gun season to be on Sunday to give private landowners only the first chance
 19 of exercising their right to hunt on their own property, and following all current hunting
 20 rules and regulations while protecting their property rights, thus giving them an
 21 opportunity to take immediate family members and children hunting with less risk of
 22 harm and no educational days missed.

23 We encourage legislation to reduce the deer population in Ohio to 250,000. We
 24 encourage landowners to facilitate this goal by allowing hunters on their property.

25 To achieve the 250,000 population ODNR should consider any or all of the following
 26 suggestions:

- 27 1. We encourage having a doe-only season and a three-day muzzle loaded deer
- 28 season the last week of October;
- 29 2. We support an open season from September to April on antlerless deer until the
- 30 population reaches a desired level;
- 31 3. We support requiring hunters to take a doe before a buck;
- 32 4. Professional outfitters should be allowed additional deer tags to issue to clients to
- 33 encourage more hunting and increase income opportunities to landowners; and
- 34 5. We support a longer hunting season or a special two-week season for farmers and
- 35 property owners.

36 We support efforts to work with the Division of Wildlife to develop and implement
 37 programs whereby deer killed may be donated to food banks across the state.

38 ODNR needs to develop a crop indemnity program to compensate landowners for
 39 loss and damage.

40
 41 **Ground Hog**

573

42 Because of damage to crops, building, and machinery, we recommend the Ohio
 43 Department of Natural Resources find methods to greatly reduce the ground hog
 44 population.

45 We support the discretionary use of lethal devices for the control of ground hogs.

1 **Raccoon** **574**
 2 We support year-round hunting season on raccoon.
 3 We support classifying raccoons and muskrats as a pest.

4
 5 **Black Vultures** **575**
 6 We support programs to reduce black vultures.
 7 We oppose any permit fee to kill black vultures.
 8 Farmers experiencing black vulture related livestock losses in one year should be
 9 allowed to apply for a control permit prior to the next calving and lambing season.
 10 We recommend that Ohio wildlife officers be authorized to issue damage control
 11 permits for black vultures instead of the federal fish and game officials in order to
 12 expedite the permitting process.

13
 14 **Feral Swine** **576**
 15 We urge the State of Ohio to take actions necessary to eradicate the feral hog
 16 population.
 17 We support making it illegal to import, maintain or hunt wild/feral hogs at private
 18 hunting preserves and/or releasing hogs to roam at-large.

19
 20 **WEED AND PEST CONTROL**

21
 22 **Weed and Pest Control** **581**
 23 We support enforcement of the law that requires highway departments, public
 24 utilities, governmental bodies, private citizens, and corporations that own or lease land to
 25 control noxious weeds, pests and nuisances on their properties. We encourage the
 26 establishment of a state task force responsible for developing a more effective noxious
 27 weed law. We encourage farmers to mow noxious weeds in time to prevent their
 28 seeding.
 29 We support control of all state listed noxious weeds, identified invasive and nuisance
 30 plant species and will continue to seek adequate funding for research and control
 31 programs. We further support the addition of Autumn Olive, Ailanthus, Garlic Mustard
 32 and Japanese Honeysuckle to the list of noxious weeds by the Ohio Department of
 33 Agriculture.
 34 We support the practice of reseeded roadsides to provide wildflowers or
 35 grass/legume cover and enforcing the eradication of multiflora rose on state, federal,
 36 county, and township roadsides.
 37 We support monitoring of the federal executive order regarding non-native invasive
 38 species as to its impact on agriculture.
 39 We support the removal of abandoned orchards and vineyards through enforcement
 40 of current law and passage of additional legislation for control of pests and diseases that
 41 may be generated from these properties.
 42 We believe landowners should have the right to determine the frequency and timing
 43 of mowing CRP enrolled land.

REGIONAL ISSUES

Darby Watershed 591

We support the actions of the agricultural community and their involvement in the development of the Darby Watershed Joint Board action plan and its implementation.

Scioto River Watershed 592

We support the continued funding of a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the Scioto River Watershed. CREP is a local, state, federal and private partnership which is beneficial to individual farmers putting conservation practices on land to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in the Scioto River and its watersheds.

Wayne National Forest 593

We encourage Wayne National Forest to stay with the most recent 10-year plan regarding the harvesting of timber.

We encourage Wayne National Forest to utilize funds for the development of recreational facilities instead of the acquisition of additional land.

Wayne National Forest should maintain line fences with adjoining property owners who are engaged in agricultural practices. If real estate taxes are not paid to local counties in the Wayne National Forest area, the payments in lieu paid to counties should be comparable to the income that would have been collected from real estate taxes.

We support legislation that withdraws Ohio's consent for the purchase of additional land for the Wayne National Forest.

All revenues generated from commercial activities related to the forest shall be returned to the U.S. Treasury to be appropriated at the discretion of Congress.

Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) 594

Any assessment of the landowners by the MWCD needs to be fair and equitable.

The board of the MWCD should be expanded by either the appointment of members by the county commissioners of each respective county, or by election by the general public.

The MWCD should focus on its original purpose of water quality, flood control and conservation.

The MWCD needs to return a portion of any assessment collected back to the county where collected for conservancy district maintenance projects in that county.

We oppose the use of MWCD assessment monies for dredging reservoir basins when the dredging is for recreational use and not flood control.

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District should place a notice of meetings in the daily newspaper in each county affected at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

The MWCD should reimburse county auditors and treasurers for the costs of the additional work performed as a result of collecting the MWCD assessment.

The MWCD should avoid duplication of current available services, for example hiring watershed technicians.

MWCD should make public all of their expenditures.

1 **Great Lakes Water Resources** **595**

2 The Great Lakes are one of America’s most important natural public treasures.
 3 Together, the Great Lakes account for 90 percent of the United State’s surface fresh
 4 water resources. The Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces serve as stewards of this
 5 resource and have a shared duty to protect, conserve and manage these renewable but
 6 finite waters. As a result we believe:

- 7 1. The authority to control, protect, and conserve the Great Lakes from diversion lies
 8 with the Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces;
- 9 2. Water resources should be regulated at the state level, not the federal level,
 10 reducing the chance that water resources could be exploited by other states; and
- 11 3. We should continue to monitor and actively participate in the implementation of
 12 the Great Lakes Compact to ensure that agricultural interests are represented and
 13 concerns addressed.

14
 15 **Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Action Plan** **596**

16 We support the rights of states to develop programs that are scientifically based,
 17 economically sound and to the maximum extent possible, delivered in a flexible and
 18 voluntary manner to address the agricultural nonpoint source portion of the Gulf of
 19 Mexico Hypoxia Action Plan (Action Plan). We believe that strategies to implement the
 20 goals and objectives of the Action Plan must be developed and administered at local
 21 level. Any policies made regarding implementation of the Action Plan must be based on
 22 sound scientific data and must give proper consideration to the sustainability of a viable
 23 agbioresource industry in the state of Ohio.

24
 25 **Blanchard River Watershed** **597**

26 We support the efforts to reduce the flooding problems in the Blanchard River
 27 Watershed as long as agriculture and landowners rights are protected.

28
 29 **Lake Erie** **598**

30 We insist that there is a thorough comprehensive science based study of all point and
 31 nonpoint source discharges into the western basin of Lake Erie, including Maumee Bay,
 32 to evaluate their full impact on nutrients transported into the lake before any widespread
 33 regulations are imposed only on the agricultural community.

