SPEAK OUT

October 2009

Vote YES for Issue 2

Protecting our farmers, our animals and our economy

This fall, Ohioans have an important issue to support on the ballot. State Issue 2 is a proposal that, if passed, would create the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board. The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation supports Issue 2 and is urging its members and stakeholders to do the same.

Meeting changing consumer expectations and keeping decisions about food animal care in our state, where they belong, is why Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, along with a number of Ohio's political and community leaders, have come together to support Issue 2. The board will bring a broad range of Ohio animal care expertise to the table to set effective, common-sense animal care policies that continue excellent care of Ohio's food animals, while also protecting our food supply and keeping food safe, affordable and locally grown.

Issue 2 is strongly supported by legislative leaders from both political parties, Gov. Ted Strickland and Ohio's agriculture community. There were a number of steps that led to the introduction of the board in the Ohio legislature and then on the statewide ballot.

How Issue 2 got to the Ballot – *a bipartisan effort*

House Joint Resolution 2 (HJR 2), sponsored by Rep. Allan Sayre (D-Dover), and Senate Joint Resolution 6 (SJR 6), sponsored by Sen. Bob Gibbs (R-Lakeville), were introduced June 18 in both chambers, and passed in their respective chambers in late June. HJR 2 was co-sponsored by Rep. Margaret Ruhl (R-Mt. Vernon), and SJR 6 was co-sponsored by Sen. Jason Wilson (D-Columbiana).

On July 6, the Ohio Senate amended and passed HJR 2. On July 13, the Ohio House and Senate overwhelmingly passed Amended SJR 6 (the measure passed 83-16 in the House and 31-1 in the Senate) that placed the measure before Ohio voters in November. And Aug. 12, Ohio's Secretary of State announced the proposal to create the Board would be designated as State Issue 2 on the November 2009 ballot.

Why Issue 2 is the right approach – *addressing consumer expectations and increased activism*

While Ohio farmers' commitment to ensuring excellent care for their animals and providing safe, high quality, locally grown food is as solid as it's been for more than 100 years, consumers in Ohio and across the country are more aware of food production and more interested in where their food comes from.

That means knowing that animals are healthy and well cared for, that food is safe and of the highest quality, and that farmers are running their farms responsibly and

following relevant regulations. Consumers also want choice at the grocery store, both in the foods they buy and in how those foods are produced.

At the same time, consumer expectations have attracted out-of-state activist groups that have capitalized on animal care concerns with emotional campaigns and extreme legislative measures. These groups, with not-so-hidden agendas of advocating vegetarian lifestyles for all of us and shutting down large farm operations altogether, pose a significant threat to Ohio agriculture.

Members of the Board – *a diverse group of Ohio experts*

Because building strong consumer confidence in Ohio's agriculture community is one desired outcome of the board's work, structure of the board is diverse in makeup. Its membership reflects the important role it will play in shaping food production and livestock care in Ohio and in ensuring that decisions are made after careful consideration of facts, science and impact on all Ohioans. The board will be made up of 13 Ohioans, who will apply their broad expertise in making decisions affecting Ohio animal agriculture. The director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture will serve as chair.

Ten members will be appointed to the board by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. These 10 members will be Ohio residents and will include the following:

- A family farmer
- A veterinarian who is licensed in the state
- The state veterinarian at the Ohio Department of Agriculture
- A food safety expert
- A representative of a county humane society that is organized under state law
- Two members from statewide farm organizations
- The dean of an Ohio agriculture college or university, and
- Two members of the public representing Ohio consumers.

In addition, one family farmer will be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one family farmer will be appointed by the President of the Senate to serve on the board.

Farm Support - *a united agriculture community*

Ohio's agriculture community, along with other stakeholders in food production and elected leaders of both political parties, believe the best regulations for animal care will be achieved when all interested parties join together to develop a framework that is both effective and practical for consumers and for farmers.

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation is playing a core role in the Issue 2 campaign, because members recognize the board is the right approach to reach that goal. Keeping animal care decisions in Ohio – and made by Ohioans – is essential to the future of all farmers in our state. Further, the board approach is a far better option for farmers than more extremist measures being proposed and passed in other states.

Getting Involved – *how to do your part*

A committee, Ohioans for Livestock Care Political Action Committee (PAC), has been formed to educate voters about Issue 2 and the need for such a measure in Ohio.

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation is encouraging our farm community to get behind this measure 110 percent. As a farmer, you can support the Issue 2 campaign by:
Inviting legislators, elected officials and community leaders to take tours of your farm;
Contacting your mayor to sign a resolution of support;
Talking with farm workers, customers and neighbors about the measure;
Being prepared to tell your story;
Continue promoting a positive farm image (make sure your farm/facilities are clean at all times); and getting on the campaign mailing list. In addition, materials are being prepared for your use. If you are interested in ordering campaign materials, please contact your organization director.

Today and tomorrow, we must unite as a community to share all the great work Ohio farmers do. We hope that you will join us in supporting this measure and vote YES for Issue 2 to create the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board.

To learn more about the board, to volunteer on the Issue 2 campaign, or to donate, visit www.ohiolivestockcare.com.

Paid for by Ohioans for Livestock Care Political Action Committee, John C. Fisher, Treasurer
280 North High Street • Columbus, OH 43215
www.OhioLivestockCare.com

Questions:

1. Prior to this council guide, were you aware of Ohio's Issue 2 campaign?
2. Is your council supportive of Issue 2 and the Livestock Care Standards Board?
3. Would your council be willing to help spread the word about Issue 2? If yes, please visit www.ohiolivestockcare.com to volunteer.

November Topic: Please note the transition information later in this guide.

Information Sources:

Ohioans for Livestock Care - http://ohiolivestockcare.org

CONNECTIONS

COMPARE YOUR RESPONSES

The following is a representative sample of the responses to the August Speakout Guide on the issue of the *Ohio's Food Policy Council*.

1. **Are food policy councils a good idea or is this just another example of government intrusion in to the agriculture industry?**

- Yes, if the councils standardize regulations from county to county in a common sense way.
- We should use the agencies that are already in place such as Extension Service, WIC, etc. We don't feel it would be an intrusion but it would overlap other programs.
- It will not help the farmers. Looking at your map where the food councils exist, they are in the metro area, not where the farmers live.
- Yes, the state department of agriculture is already the overseer of the food chain and has guidelines.
- Mixed response. Yes it is more government intrusion, but may be advantageous for farmers if the interests of traditional agriculture are upheld.
- We know the governor is trying to assist agriculture and those who are benefitted by good farmer, good health.
- Have they instituted change? Since the task force started in May of 2008 and made recommendations, have these recommendations produced any results?
- We are not sure; it depends on who is on the board. We need to educate consumers about food.
- Yes, good idea if it helps the local farmer. If it creates needs and uses.
- Yes, seems like a good idea but only if recommendations are acted upon.

2. **Does a food policy council exist in your area? If yes, are you or members of your council involved? If no, has there been discussion regarding forming a council?**

Most respondents were not aware of food policy councils and/or were not involved locally with their food policy council. A few additional comments are listed below.

- Why form a new council when we can't finance 4-H, an established working agency.
- After more consideration and discussions we came to the conclusion that a food policy council might be a good idea. It would help coordinate the local producers with farmers markets, restaurants, schools, etc.

- Yes, Lucas county is in a food policy council.
- Yes, if the farmer is not aware of the food council, what good is it?
- Could Extension take action to start a council?

3. **What should be the focus of a food policy council? How should councils prioritize their goals?**

- Assess and see where the greatest needs are.
- Educate the welfare people on how to use/fix fresh veggies and fruits.
- We should promote local food to local people.
- Focus on how to make farmers more profitable and Ohio sustainable.
- Promote and enhance agriculture for the small farm operation so they may deliver a good product to the local consumer.
- Promote Ohio Proud program.
- We feel agricultural viability should be the focus of a food policy council.
- Improve communications and promote business between local producers and local consumers.

HONEYBAKED WINNER

 # 20 Advisory Council
Licking County

New Advisory Council Opportunities

First formed over 70 years ago in Shelby County, Advisory Councils have long been synonymous with Ohio Farm Bureau. If we look back at the history and purpose of the Advisory Council program, we quickly see that the needs of the organization and the purpose that led to the program's development are not very different today. What have changed are the culture and indeed the very world that we now live in.

As you may recall, the July 2008 guide discussed the history of the Ohio Farm Bureau Advisory Council program. The guide also asked for suggestions regarding the future of the program. Many of you had excellent suggestions and some of them made it into this plan. The OFBF board of trustees, at its board meeting this past June, recognized the need to evolve the council program and approved a proposal to move forward with changes. It is important that we provide opportunity for issue input and discussion to all our members and in the format that best suits their lifestyle. Outlined below is an overview of the program enhancements which will integrate both print and online media to advance the goals of the Advisory Council program.

Advisory Council/*Buckeye Farm News* integration
Ohio Farm Bureau Public Policy and Communications staff will begin collaborating on the Advisory Council program. The Advisory Council program will use *Buckeye Farm News* as the Speak Out advisory council guide under the direction of the Communications department. Public Policy staff will continue to manage all other aspects of the advisory council program.

By incorporating the monthly topics into *Buckeye Farm News*, Advisory Councils will have more topics to choose from more often. The current Speak Out guide is mailed 10 times per year. By using *Buckeye Farm News* as the discussion guide, councils will have 16 issues each year to choose from for discussion purposes. This also will provide OFBF with feedback on important issues and stories from each *Buckeye Farm News*.

The existing system for processing Advisory Council feedback will remain very similar. As always you will be able to complete an on-line recording sheet and e-mail it to Ohio Farm Bureau. You can also use a traditional paper copy recording sheet. Instead of a monthly topic-specific recording sheet, a generic form will be provided to record the answers to discussion questions. *Buckeye Farm News* will have topical discussion questions in each edition.

I know many of you are curious about the Honeybaked Ham promotion. Due to great popularity, the Honeybaked Ham promotion will continue. Winners will be announced regularly in the Advisory Council section of *Buckeye Farm News*.

Facebook

Ohio Farm Bureau will also provide a forum on the Ohio Farm Bureau Facebook page to provide readers an opportunity to discuss current events in agriculture and rural policy. Utilizing the Ohio Farm Bureau Facebook discussion board feature, anyone can participate in policy discussions. This will be promoted to Farm Bureau members as a convenient, real-time method of discussing policy issues in agriculture. Public Policy staff will monitor the discussions and will glean information appropriately for the purposes of policy discussions.

Transition

We are excited about the possibilities for increased participation in the Advisory Council program through these new opportunities. The Oct. 15 edition of *Buckeye Farm News* will feature the new format and can be used as your November Advisory Council Guide. Additional *Buckeye Farm News* copies will be mailed in November and December.

It is important that all Advisory Council members receive *Buckeye Farm News*. If a member of your council does not currently receive *Buckeye Farm News*, please let us know. E-mail *speakout@ofbf.org* or call Regina Mayhugh at 614-246-8285. In addition, your local organization director should be able to help you with general questions regarding this transition.

OHIO FARM BUREAU®

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