



Advisory Councils: *Speak Out*

Advisory Council questions: Policy development

Advisory Councils are groups of friends and neighbors that are part of Farm Bureau grassroots by speaking up for agriculture and suggesting policies and ideas that influence Farm Bureau policy at the local, state and national levels. What county, Ohio and/or American Farm Bureau policy ideas or recommendations does your council suggest? Your ideas will be shared with your county policy development committee. If you are not responding online and need more room to share your ideas, feel free to add additional pages using standard notebook or printer paper and attach it to your minutes.

List your responses as follows:

1. County Farm Bureau policies
2. Ohio Farm Bureau policies
3. American Farm Bureau policies

Reach out idea: This special topic is a key opportunity to invite someone new to experience an Advisory Council meeting and Farm Bureau at its grassroots best.

Who could you ask?

Results of Advisory Council survey

In spring 2010, Advisory Council members were surveyed about a wide variety of topics. The goal of the survey was to offer council members to tell OFBF:

- Who they are (demographics, age and occupation)
- About their Farm Bureau membership and personal involvement in Farm Bureau
- About their council involvement (the reason councils are important to them, the purpose of councils, how councils are involved in Farm Bureau activities, individual council goals, etc.)

- How council members use technology
- Ideas about growing and strengthening the Advisory Council program

The responses were important in helping OFBF better know and serve council members as well as hear grassroots ideas directly. Here's what the survey revealed:

The typical advisory council member is an active Farm Bureau member, 66 or older and a longtime participant in the council program.

By far, the primary reason members indicated why they were involved in their council related to the social aspects of getting together on a regular basis for a good meal, fellowship and some discussion. In fact, the top three reasons listed were social, to connect with farmers and speak out on agriculture. Farm Bureau policy and personal/professional development were ranked 4 and 5, respectively.

In a recent edition of *Buckeye Farm News*, councils were also asked to share what they want to do. Many councils indicated in their goals and in the "What should councils of 2020 look like" question that they wanted some specific things such as:

- Younger members involved
- Inviting speakers to your meetings
- Supporting your local Farm Bureau activity or community service project

Based on council feedback, OFBF has made some changes to the program including bringing back the Fun Sheets, simplifying discussion topics and creating additional opportunities for policy suggestions.