

STATE

priority issues

STATE CAPITAL BUDGET

Investing in critical infrastructure without encumbering our children with excessive future debt is a priority. As state policy makers identify capital budget priorities, we will support critical investments in agriculture and education. In the fall of 2010, tornados swept NE Ohio, significantly damaging Ohio State's Agricultural Research and Development Center facilities. While insurance has provided much of the needed funds to restore and rebuild, facilities will need additional dollars in order to meet an ever-growing student demand. An investment in OSU's OARDC campus is an investment in the future of Ohio. In addition, Ohio voters have overwhelmingly supported passage of Clean Ohio programs. To the extent that dollars are available, Ohio Farm Bureau supports including Clean Ohio funding in the State Capital Budget process.

We call for a Capital Budget that includes

- **Funding for Farmland Preservation and Clean Ohio**
- **Support for rebuilding OARDC's Wooster Campus**

BUSINESS CLIMATE AND TAXES

a sound business climate, a low tax burden, a just legal system, and reasonable labor laws will create and retain Ohio jobs and grow our economy. Maintaining a strong CAUV program, clarifying Ohio's sales tax exemption for agricultural equipment, and eliminating the capital gains tax will help keep Ohio farms strong. We oppose mandates on small businesses which negatively impact Ohio's family farmers. We support regulatory reform and consistency, but any plan to streamline government or implement regulatory reform should maintain the position of Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture 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 production/safety, environmental quality and natural resource (soil and water) conservation.

We call for the passage of legislation to expand Ohio's agricultural linked deposit program

GROWING AN AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

Agriculture is Ohio's number one industry. Nonetheless, there are significant opportunities to continue to create jobs and investment in our state by growing agricultural opportunities. Bringing together the agriculture, retail, restaurant, travel, and tourism communities together can create value-added opportunities for Ohio farmers and create new partnerships for economic growth. Identifying reasonable, common-sense regulatory practices which promote farm markets and the availability of agricultural products while responding to consumer needs for safe, healthy, and affordable food options.

We support adoption of law establishing a voluntary marketing program for Ohio agricultural products

We support adopting legislation that increases agritourism efforts and promotes agricultural job creation

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

A variety of energy sources need to be employed to address demands for fuel and power. We will provide leadership in the development of a comprehensive state energy policy that incorporates use of coal, nuclear, natural gas, petroleum and competitive renewable technologies. Local communities need resources to address economic, logistic, social and service issues as large energy development projects move forward. Collaborative efforts should be enhanced to ensure, repair and remediate farm land and public infrastructure after energy development projects are completed. Ohio should partner with Ohio's agbioresource community as both a direct and indirect source of energy production and environmental stewardship.

Environmental stewardship has always been a priority for Ohio's farmers through their voluntary adoption of conservation management practices. We will work to develop and adopt state policies, laws and regulations that promote water quality and maintain access to Ohio's water resources for navigation, commerce and recreation through sound science and the protection of private property rights, including the right to reasonable use.

We support legislation to include on-farm energy production that is incidental to agricultural operations in the definition of agriculture when at least 50% of the material used in energy production is generated on-farm.

We support legislation governing the Great Lakes Compact that ensures water used for food and fiber production and/or products is in the public interest, is a reasonable use of water

and is not considered a diversion.

We will monitor water quality policies and legislation as they are developed and regulations as they are implemented.

ANIMAL CARE

Ohio agriculture has a continued commitment to providing excellent animal care while ensuring the economic viability of Ohio's animal agriculture community, family farms, and the continued availability of a safe, locally grown, and affordable food supply. We will be engaged on legislative and regulatory issues that relate to the comprehensive role of animals in our lives.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, RURAL SCHOOLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We encourage the adoption and promotion of nationally recognized best practices set forth for agricultural education programs. We also support funding for extended time; the development of agriscience courses that qualify for science credits; comprehensive career technical planning to ensure access to agricultural education programs for all students; programs that assure farmers have access to adult agricultural education and workforce development; state funding to local schools for agricultural education and FFA; ongoing alignment of secondary agricultural education programs with related college programs, especially in high technology related careers; the integration of agriculture and related industry in STEM curriculum; and the integration of basic agricultural literacy for all students in K-12 schools. Agriculture related continuing education programs should be offered at branch campuses and community and technical schools. Rural students should have the same opportunities and benefits offered to urban and rural students. In ensuring that education programs give breadth, quality, and maximum opportunity to our citizens we support distance learning programs, Ag in the Classroom programs, and farm to school programs throughout Ohio.

INCREASE GRASSROOTS POLITICAL AWARENESS & INVOLVEMENT

OFBF will work with Farm Bureau members to create numerous opportunities for political education and engagement during the 2012 election cycle. Some activities will include new district education, open seat screenings, Ag Day at the Capital and other events with a focus on political issues, candidate education, and promotion of the candidate reception program for County Farm Bureaus.