



Community Council Newsletter

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Hello Everyone,

Spring is here. It's that time of year when everyone around the farm is getting equipment ready to run, field work will soon be at fever pitch and the only seat many folks want to occupy is a tractor seat. When planting is done, or the weather doesn't fully cooperate, take some time to call your friends together for some lively discussion at a *Farm Bureau Community Council* meeting.

The Discussion Packet – A Quick Look

The enclosed packet has four new discussion guides that should give your group a few options for their meetings scheduled into early summer. Topics for discussion include:

Agriculture, Science and Technology: During the twentieth century American agriculture applied available science and technology to create a leadership position in food and fiber production. Investments in several technologies - mechanical (tractors, equipment and farm automation), chemical (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and seed treatments) and biological (hybrids, genetics and animal husbandry vaccines) - helped our nation become the *breadbasket of the world*. Today, we have additional production activities relating to energy (ethanol, biodiesel, biofuel, wind and solar) and bio-based materials (plastics, polymers, pigments and pharmaceuticals) for industry and consumer use. *Should the definition of "agriculture" change?* How could a new definition of the industry reflect our leadership in food and fiber production, as well as reflect newer activities in diverse areas?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- **OFBF Website: Fertilizer Use Study** - Ohio State University Extension is looking for help from farmers and crop consultants on updating the state's fertilizer recommendations. Through the On-farm Fertilizer Trials project, Extension plans to determine the optimal rates of fertilization on the state's major crops by gathering data from hundreds of farms statewide over the next two to three years. More information can be found at: <https://ofbf.org/2016/04/14/farmers-consultants-needed-help-effort-update-ohios-fertilizer-guidelines/>
- **OFBF Website: Why Should We Care About Science** – Listen to a recent Town Hall Ohio broadcast as program host, Joe Cornely explores the issues at: <https://ofbf.org/2014/09/12/why-should-we-care-about-science/>
- **OFBF Website: BioGas Projects Across Ohio** – Learn more about biogas technology expansion across Ohio through an article published in the Buckeye Farm News at: <https://ofbf.org/2011/03/23/biogas-expansion-in-ohio-relies-on-manure-other-wastes-generated-on-the-farm/>

Land Use Planning: Land-use planning, regional planning and/or urban planning are general terms used to describe how various communities seek to order or regulate land use in a way to prevent land-use conflicts. It's an activity where stakeholders look at long term needs while safeguarding resources. Land and water potential, social and economic conditions are identified to help select and adopt what are seen as the best land-use options. Where do rural communities and agriculture fit in the scheme of things?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- **Ohio's Country Journal Website: Land Values Analysis** - New analysis finds that, despite significant value declines in Midwestern corn and soybean states, farmland values saw little to no change in the four-state area of Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. In fact, Ohio saw an increase of 0.2% in land values, year over year. More information can be found at: <http://ocj.com/2016/04/land-values-holding-steady-in-ohio/>
- **Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission Website:** The Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is one of several commissions in Ohio working in a dedicated service area focusing on community planning issues. MORPC is a voluntary association of Central Ohio governments and regional organizations that envisions and embraces innovative directions in transportation, energy, housing, land use, the environment and economic prosperity. Its makeup involved the 15 county Central Ohio region. More information can be found at: <http://www.morpc.org/about-morpc/index>
- **OFBF Website: Land Use Planning Program Held** - Farmers, landowners, planners, local officials, land trust leadership, economic development professionals and others interested in preserving farmland in Ohio got tips from the experts on the subject during a farmland summit. They explored techniques, tools and methods, including different ideas on enterprises and marketing strategies that can be used to help people generate income as a way to preserve farmland. More information on the event can be found at: <https://ofbf.org/events/13th-annual-ohio-farmland-preservation-summit/>

Role of the Farm Service Agency: The Farm Service Agency (FSA) was set up by the USDA in the 1990s to incorporate programs associated with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), the Risk Management Agency (crop insurance) and the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). Many programs and services can trace their beginnings in the 1930s, and are still governed by local committees. How often do you use FSA programs and resources? How should these programs be enhanced to ensure service to farming communities?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- **USDA-FSA Ohio Program Website:** More information on Ohio programs can be found at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=oh&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>
- **OFBF Website - Conservation Expert Hired to Manage Program:** Protecting Ohio's water resources through innovative agricultural practices is the goal of a new partnership between the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The two organizations will create and manage demonstration farms in the Blanchard River Watershed. More information can be found at: <https://ofbf.org/2015/10/29/ofbf-and-usda-nrcs-partner-to-establish-demonstration-farms-in-blanchard/>
- **OFBF Website - OSUE and FSA Collaboration** – The Ohio State University Extension and the Farm Service Agency offered meetings to discuss the crop side of the 2014 Farm Bill. The 2014 Farm Bill has instituted major changes to the federal farm programs which required landowners and farmers to make a couple major decisions during the winter of 2015. More be found at: <https://ofbf.org/2015/01/07/farm-bill-workshops-to-be-held-in-ne-ohio/>

Transportation Policy: A considerable amount of effort went into creating our nation's transportation system. Road, rail, waterway and air service infrastructure have all seen periods of technological and economic advantage, dominance, upturns and downturns in use. Even with all the development and turmoil, it is easier to get people, goods and services from one point to another in 2016 than it was in 1900. Government, business, and consumer groups agree that all facets of the nation's transportation infrastructure are due for a major refit. What *sharing the road* issues need to be explored and addressed to ensure that farm, business and residential consumers can go around the corner, or around the world, if needed?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- **Ohio Conference on Freight Website:** The Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) sponsors the annual Ohio Conference on Freight. The program brings industry leaders and community stakeholders together to discuss a variety of transportation related issues. OFBF has been involved with these programs for several years. More information on the event can be found at: <http://ohiofreight.org/OCF.htm>
- **Ohio's County Journal Website: Transportation** - Agriculture in the United States has long benefitted from having the best transportation infrastructure in the world. There are a number of key transportation projects going on right now that can help build upon and secure this advantage in the future. More information can be found at: <http://ocj.com/2015/11/transportation-is-key-for-the-future-of-u-s-agriculture/>
- **OFBF Website – CDL Permit Issues:** The U.S. Department of Transportation listened to the concerns of farmers and said it will not issue new regulations related to agricultural transportation and commercial driver's license (CDL) provisions, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. OFBF was among those that submitted comments to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) after it issued a new guidance document that farmers feared would require them to obtain a CDL. More information on this issue can be found at: <https://ofbf.org/2011/08/23/departement-of-transportation-says-no-new-cdl-requirements-for-farmers/>

Remember, you are not limited to these materials - Feel free to discuss additional topics and issues generated from the local newspaper, other publications and/or key events happening in your neighborhood. Additional information on possible discussion topics and resources can be found on the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation website at <https://ofbf.org/2015/11/23/what-are-community-councils/>

Keep in Touch with Farm Bureau

Need some additional help? Contact your county Farm Bureau office for assistance. Please let Amy Hurst know if you need more forms or have questions via e-mail at ahurst@ofbf.org or by phone at 614.246.8262.

Remember to send your council meeting forms and correspondence directly to your county Farm Bureau.

Many of Farm Bureau's action plans started with conversation around a kitchen table, living room or front porch; lively discussion continues to develop using web applications, too. Your participation as a community council member makes sure that our organization continues to focus on critical issues, create better policy and helps people work together to get things done.

We look forward to visiting with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale R. Arnold" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dale Arnold
Director, Energy, Utility & Local Government Policy
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation



Agriculture, Science and Technology

Defining the Issue

During the twentieth century American agriculture applied available science and technology to create a leadership position in food and fiber production. Investments in mechanical (tractors, equipment and farm automation), chemical (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and seed treatments) and biological (hybrids, genetics and animal husbandry vaccines) technology helped identify our nation as the *breadbasket of the world*.

Science and technology continue to develop. During the later years of the twentieth century and up to the present, farmers continue to enhance food and fiber production. Moreover, they are employing these tools to accommodate new on farm resources and production activities relating to energy (ethanol, biodiesel, biofuel, wind and solar) and bio-based materials (plastics, polymers, pigments and pharmaceuticals) for industry and consumer use.

Should the definition of “agriculture” change? How could a new definition of the industry reflect our leadership in food and fiber production, as well as reflect our newer activities in diverse areas?

AFBF Policy

We support:

- Definition of Agriculture - A uniform definition of agriculture which includes use of natural resources in the production of all plants (agronomic and horticultural), aquatic species (aquaculture), forestry (silviculture), animal (including equine), fungi, beekeeping (apiculture) and all related production activities.
- Biotechnology Initiatives - We will encourage and educate producers to be good stewards of biotechnology to: Maintain the integrity of the U.S. food and grain supply; Ensure technology remains effective through adherence to regulations (i.e. buffer, refuge, storage, transport, Integrated Pest Management); and Preserve opportunities for future biotech products and processes.
- National Research Strategy - We urge state and federal political leaders to develop a positive national strategy for biotechnology research, development and consumer education. Part of this strategy should include an open and frank dialogue with all interested parties. We believe that our competitive advantage in world markets will be maintained only by the continued support and encouragement of technological advancements.

Definition of Agriculture – Ohio Revised Code

"Agriculture" includes farming; ranching; aquaculture; algaculture meaning the farming of algae; apiculture and related apicultural activities, production of honey, beeswax,

honeycomb, and other related products; horticulture; viticulture, winemaking, and related activities; animal husbandry, including, but not limited to, the care and raising of livestock, equine, and fur-bearing animals; poultry husbandry and the production of poultry and poultry products; dairy production; the production of field crops, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees, flowers, sod, or mushrooms; timber; pasturage; any combination of the foregoing; the processing, drying, storage, and marketing of agricultural products when those activities are conducted in conjunction with, but are secondary to, such husbandry or production; and any additions or modifications to the foregoing made by the director of agriculture

OFBF Policy

We Support:

- AgBioSciences - Funding of research and development of alternative uses of agricultural commodities for sources of energy, medical supplies, nutraceutical, building supplies, polymers, biodegradable packaging, etc.
- Development of the BioHio Ag Research Park and the Food and Agricultural Technology Commercialization and Economic Development Program (ATECH), AgBioscience Innovation Grant (ABIG) and Research Enhancement Competitive Grant Program (RECGP); and Ohio Bio Preferred purchasing program.

Discussion Questions

1. How have you seen agriculture change over the past few years (or family generations) on the farm? How have investments in equipment, fertilizer, hybrids and other technology helped farms in your community contribute to making American agriculture the *Breadbasket of the World*?
2. Are farms in your neighborhood getting involved in activities and projects beyond food and fiber production? Are they exploring energy production and/or creating feed stocks for other industry and consumer applications?
3. If American agriculture was called the *Breadbasket of the World* in the previous century, what should be our moniker today? How would you define or redefine the term, *Agriculture*?
4. Many community stakeholders know that agriculture is more than just a business, it's a way of life. How could branching out into other production areas beyond food and fiber impact family tradition, culture and the perception of farming in the community?
5. Given Farm Bureau's vision, policy and experience, what leadership position should the organization take in education/outreach when it comes to sharing agriculture's traditional and potential new roles in production? As local stakeholders, how would your community council like to work with county Farm Bureau leadership to address this subject?



Land Use Planning

Defining the Issue

Land-use planning, regional planning and/or urban planning are general terms used to describe how various levels of government, planning commissions and communities seek to order or regulate land use in a way to prevent land-use conflicts. It's an activity where community stakeholders look at long term needs while safeguarding resources. Land and water potential, social and economic conditions are identified to help select and adopt what are seen as the best land-use options. Land use planning exercises are incorporated into larger, comprehensive strategies that provide a vision for the future rural, suburban and urban neighborhoods development.

Where do rural communities and agriculture fit in the scheme of things? It all depends on the area's changing demographics. Over the last several years many rural residents have been asked to join land use planning discussions focusing on county, multi-county and major metropolitan areas around the state.

AFBF Policy

We believe that land use planning can best be accomplished at the county or comparable level of government and by private landowners.

Adequate returns on investment from agricultural land and tax incentives for production agriculture are the most effective methods of preserving production of food and fiber.

We support:

- Requiring all lands, including state and federal lands, being subject to all provisions of local land use planning ordinances that do not adversely affect private property rights or the selective restraint of commerce;
- Legislation preventing an agency from controlling the use of lands by proclamation;
- The use of incentives to encourage commercial reuse or redevelopment of existing business or industrial sites rather than new undeveloped site;
- The following safeguards in any land use plan: Representation of agricultural producers on all planning and control boards; the right of appeal by an individual landowner at all levels, especially the local level and protection for private ownership rights.
- The voluntary transfer of development rights to limit farmland conversion;
- Continued funding of the Forest Legacy Act; and conservation easements for less than perpetuity to be available to farmers and ranchers with a federal tax deduction.

We oppose:

- The continued encroachment of federal and state agencies and local governments on agricultural and forest lands;
- Federal legislation and agency policy which would impose land use regulations as a qualification for federal grants and loans;
- Any effort to establish buffer areas without just compensation around parks, preserves or other areas being protected for their environmental or ecological value;
- The formation or expansion of any state or federal wildlife refuges, recreational, conservation or wilderness areas which result in a net loss of private lands;
- The creation of a national wildlife refuge by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service without Congressional approval;
- State or national wildlife refuges, recreational or conservation areas impeding the existing natural and artificial drainage systems of landowners in the watershed;
- Compliance with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) standards as a requirement in any farmland protection program;
- Arbitrary limitations in the federal Farmland Protection Program that may discourage participation or impair state or local initiatives; and
- Federal assistance to states for land use planning.

OFBF Policy

We will work for sound land use legislation and programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Agriculture Easement Purchases and Donations:** Investigation, development and implementation of funding and tax incentive programs for the preservation of farmland through the acquisition and transfer of development rights and an impact fee paid by individuals who convert farmland to non-agricultural uses. When land is sold for development, an impact fee based on quality of land should be charged to the developer and

- used for farmland preservation. With regard to donations, research, funding, and implementations of voluntary programs to keep land in agricultural use is needed.
- Agriculture Districts: Protection of land in accordance with the Farmland Preservation Act (agricultural districts). The statute helps landowners deal with water, sewer, and electric assessments, nuisance lawsuits and powers of eminent domain.
- Agriculture Security Areas: Those operations that meet the definition of agriculture as currently defined in Ohio law, regardless of size, production method, or business structure, should be designated agriculture, not commercial. We support a reduction of the 500 acre threshold to 100 contiguous acres to enroll in an Agricultural Security Area (ASA), however, the incentive to enroll in an ASA should be higher the more acres that are enrolled.

Local and State Land Use Policies: We recommend programs to address the following issues:

- Land use decisions made locally with adequate rural participation in sub-division regulations;
- Recognition of basic property rights of individuals. State law or regulation should not take away the economic value of property without fair compensation;
- Effective zoning to meet the needs of rural Ohio. We recognize the challenges being made to agricultural practices by zoning commissions and encourage members to fight these challenges and continue to support agriculture's exemptions from Ohio's zoning laws;
- Promotion of orderly development of urban areas including: The concentration of further development; the avoidance of needless sprawl of both strip and leapfrog development; the redevelopment of existing urban areas already served by infrastructure and public services; the redirecting of business and industry into rehabilitated brownfields by providing appropriate incentives, and reduction in taxation as an incentive for people who rehabilitate old homes or build new homes on existing home sites.
- Infrastructure repair and reinvestment rather than new infrastructure development. In the case of new development, fully allocate all costs to the land developers and purchasers. Urge passage of legislation giving clear permission for political entities to impose impact fees on new non-agriculture construction;
- Coordination at all governmental levels, with consideration of adjoining land uses from county to county and from community to community;
- Long term highway construction right-of-way needs should be incorporated in any comprehensive land use plan. The Ohio Department of Transportation should make reasonable efforts to avoid taking prime farmland when planning a road project;
- The Ohio Department of Development should revise their program on "shovel ready" sites to give priority to infill and redevelopment of property rather than to clean sites of high acreage;
- We oppose zoning restrictions on timber harvesting in municipalities and other political subdivisions;
- State and local economic development initiatives should be required to include production agriculture in their recommendations;
- We oppose efforts to impose the installation of riparian buffers through zoning because it is a taking of private property. We encourage the development of educational programs to improve the understanding of farmland preservation and land-use issues. Some topics of importance are: Economic impact of the loss of prime farmland; Conservation Security Programs and Carbon Credit Programs, and The Economic Importance of Agriculture.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define land use planning? If you had to start a local land use planning process from scratch, what groups and organizations in your local community have the experience and credibility to address land use issues? What are the county Farm Bureau's attributes as a community stakeholder in this process?
2. Many land use planners look at social, economic and/or environmental attributes in the community as they create a comprehensive planning strategy. What special benefits do local farms and rural neighborhood possess that could enhance these plans. What special features need to be protected?
3. Is your rural neighborhood zoned? What advantages and challenges do you see when it comes to addressing land use planning needs for farms and rural neighborhoods given you area's zoning status?
4. Given Farm Bureau's vision, policy and experience, what local issues do you see where the organization needs to provide key leadership? What issues do you see where the organization needs to be an active, supporting participant? As community stakeholders, how would your community council like to work with county Farm Bureau leadership to address local land use planning issues?



Role of the Farm Service Agency

Defining the Issue

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) was set up by the USDA in the 1990s to incorporate programs associated with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Risk Management Agency (crop insurance), and the Farmers Home Administration. Many programs and services can trace service to farmers beginning in the 1930s.

Farmers who are eligible to participate in FSA programs have the opportunity to elect a 3-5 person committee to govern field operations. Today, the committees often oversee activities in multi-county areas in a USDA network of about 2,500 field service centers. The committees are responsible for hiring and supervising the Executive Director, who manages the day-to-day activities of the field service center and its employees. The director and most county office staff legally are employees of the farmer-elected committees rather than the federal government, although their salaries come from federal funds.

How often do you use FSA programs and resources? How should these programs be enhanced to ensure service to farming communities?

AFBF Policy

We support:

- Requiring FSA loans be secured by adequate collateral and reasonable repayment capacity;
- The loan process should be streamlined, to allow producers and lenders to implement or change management plans;
- FSA expediting loan processing to allow farmers ample time to make planting decisions;
- A requirement that FSA ensure clipping and noxious weed control is performed on acquired property;
- The FSA providing adequate levels and terms of credit;
- A review and recommendations of appropriate FSA agency policy on loan term limits, loan size limits, and interest rate subsidies;
- Extending the low-interest loan program for storage facilities to livestock forage crop storage structures, and also include controlled atmosphere structures;
- A requirement that FSA-acquired property be offered first to qualified FSA young farmers and ranchers;
- FSA farm labor housing loans;
- Easements or FSA inventoried lands remaining with FSA rather than allowing for transfer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or state agencies;
- A much broader definition of on-farm income;
- Horse boarding operations being covered under the FSA programs;

- Increasing FSA farm loans for grain and forage storage and grain handling equipment for farmers and landowners;
- Flexible cash rent agreements be treated as a standard cash rent agreement for FSA purposes and payments with the producer receiving 100 percent of those payments;
- Increased caps on and funding available for FSA loans to beginning farmers;
- Eliminating minimum years of farming participation for beginning farmer loan programs; and
- Changes to regulation so that FSA cannot require recipients of gas or oil royalties to apply 100 percent of the proceeds from royalties to loan principal when the creditor has either direct or guaranteed loans.

OFBF Policy

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 or budgetary constraints and we recognize that this could result in county office consolidation. County committees should be consulted on any proposed office change; workload and distances between offices should be a factor when considering consolidation.

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.

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

Discussion Questions

1. The Farm Service Agency administers farm commodity, crop insurance, credit, environmental, conservation, and emergency assistance programs. How often and what type of services do you access from local FSA field offices?
2. What types of services do you feel need to be done in a person-to-person format, and what programs would be valuable if they are available on line?
3. Several FSA programs are based on addressing periodic and cyclical need. Granted, disasters and adverse market conditions might not manifest themselves every year, but several times during a decade or so, assistance is needed. How should farm communities advocate to keep programs ready during a time when others outside agriculture question their need and/or government support?
4. Given Farm Bureau's vision, policy and experience, what leadership position should the organization take in outreach concerning promoting FSA programs at the local level? As local stakeholders, how would your community council like to work with county Farm Bureau leadership to address this subject?



Transportation Policy

Defining the Issue

A considerable amount of effort went into creating our nation's transportation system. Roads, rails, waterways and air have all seen periods of technological and economic advantage, dominance, upturns and downturns in use. Even with all the development and turmoil, it is easier to get people, goods and services from one point to another in 2016 than it was in 1900.

Government, business, and consumer groups agree that all facets of the nation's transportation infrastructure are due for a major refit. This translates into multibillion expenditures and investments, both public and private within the next two decades.

How would you like to see the transportation system redesigned and refitted. What *sharing the road* issues need to be explored and addressed to ensure that farm, business and residential consumers can go around the corner, or around the world if needed?

AFBF Policy

We support:

- Development of a long-range national transportation policy that views transportation as a holistic system servicing the needs of both passengers and freight across all modes and recognizes the importance of connectivity between modes. It should encourage exploration of public/private partnerships and be designed to support global competitiveness while developing the most economical and energy efficient methods of meeting future transportation needs.
- We support the maintenance and improvement of our transportation infrastructure, including: The lock and dam system and waterways; Rural highways; Railroad systems; Farm-to-market roads; and Pipelines.
- The federal government should stop making policy on the assessment and taxation of transportation property or any other property. This is a state and local matter and should remain at that level.
- The role of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in transportation and food distribution should be redefined and strengthened to monitor the agricultural transportation situation and provide educational assistance to independent, owner-operator truckers.
- The unique characteristics of agricultural transportation warrant distinction between state and federal laws and regulations. We oppose repeal of existing statutory and regulatory exemptions.
- We recommend that the manufacturers of diesel engines list their requirements of lubricity for low sulfur diesel fuels and that manufacturers of low sulfur diesel add a lubricity package that exceeds these requirements.

We oppose:

- Legislation that would mandate excessive increases in Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE) for new cars, trucks and vans;
- The adoption of vehicle emission standards or the regulation of the carbon intensity of transportation fuels if they have a long-term, negative impact on the production and use of renewable fuels or an adverse economic impact on agriculture;
- Any changes in the CAFE standards that reduce the availability and increase the cost of trucks;
- Using the metric system in our public highway mileage signs;
- Further action to change fuel standards or tax provisions on fuel at the expense of equipment performance; however, we support the improvement and enforcement of expanded fuel quality and performance standards;
- Any mandate by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that restricts fuel economy standards for small trucks to the same level as automobiles;
- Emission controls on farm vehicles that are used primarily on the farm;
- EPA requirements for retrofitting engines to meet new reduced emissions standards;
- EPA's ban on sales of excess military equipment to rural fire departments;
- Department of Transportation (DOT) implementing regulations placing restrictions on any food product being distributed on common carriers such as airlines without solid scientific evidence that such restrictions are necessary to prevent a significant risk to the public at large;
- Federal agencies closing state and U.S. highways to disallow commerce; and
- The federal mandated transportation policy that limits speed of commercial vehicles to a lower speed than the posted speed limit.

OFBF Policy

We Support:

- The option of three-shift labor to expedite any contracted highway construction and repair project.
- The use of alternative ice control methods such as corn by-products, sand or limestone chips, and reduce the use of salt and calcium chloride on federal, state, county and township highway systems in Ohio when feasible, to prevent contamination and long term effects on potable water used for drinking, livestock, and irrigation.
- The state assuming responsibility for all bridges on the state highway system, regardless of location. ODOT should make the repair and replacement of bridges, including the resizing of bridges for drainage, a priority. We support the use of properly treated wood, especially poplar, in repairing or rebuilding of bridges 40 feet or less in length.
- Revising the qualification standards specified in the Association of State Highway and Transportation manual so Ohio counties can benefit from grants and matching funds for road construction. Current standards are inappropriate for conditions in Ohio and make the construction cost prohibitive.
- Existing roads and right of ways being used wherever possible for the construction of any proposed highways.
- The positioning of mailboxes and newspaper boxes according to the Federal Postal Regulations and encourage placing them on the same side of the road. We support enforcement, by either the county engineer or county zoning inspector, of the minimum set back requirement where applicable for mail and paper boxes along state, county, and

township roads. If there is not a set-back distance, then one should be established. We propose a standard three feet from the edge of the road set-back for mailboxes to facilitate the movement of large equipment.

- The widening of state, county, and township road berms, and the widening of overpasses during new construction or reconstruction. At minimum, berms should be returned to the width prior to construction. Access roads should remain open and be maintained until the project is complete.
- Maintaining fog lines on the edges of all paved roads.
- A review of the current state funding formula for maintenance and repair of bridges on county roads. The state is responsible for prioritizing funding for projects (rather than the county) and the current formula penalizes counties that have a good bridge maintenance program.
- A revision of the applicable funding formula to increase funds for counties and townships to maintain their roads.
- Steps to get more semi trucks to use the turnpike including, for example, a review of existing load limits and tolls.
- The Ohio Department of Transportation revising their standards for headwater back up so that they do not cause flooding of farmland due to wrongly sized culverts and drainage structures under roadbeds.
- The PUCO to regularly inspecting railroad crossings for deterioration and to have crossings maintained in a timely manner.
- Allowing a 25 percent weight variance for farm implements being towed by a licensed motorized vehicle.
- Allowing a 25 percent seasonal weight variance for farm equipment.
- Farm machinery and implements being exempt from Ohio's weight laws, except for restrictions on bridges and frost law.
- The State of Ohio and all contiguous states to enter into a compact to recognize each state's commercial driver's license exemption.
- The State of Ohio maintaining fences along its highways, or, in the alternative, allow the landowners to remove a fence in disrepair.
- Identification signs being placed on all interstate overpasses designating the crossroads.
- Revisions of the highway axle limits taking into consideration the tire size and air pressure, not just axle weight.
- The ability of county engineers to establish road use maintenance agreements (RUMA) with entities developing and operating projects where heavy and repetitive loads impact road infrastructure.
- Giving counties the authority to designate reasonable primary travel routes for licensed, heavy vehicles traveling to and from permitted livestock facilities.
- Mandatory response from ODOT Permit Department within 30 days to confirm or deny a permit application.
- County Farm Bureaus' involvement in the planning, location and development of the highway construction, development or expansion projects in their counties and regions.
- Ohio Farm Bureau working with Ohio Department of Transportation to promote projects deemed worthy by local Farm Bureaus.
- Requirements for the Ohio Department of Transportation to develop plans for the efficient transportation of agricultural commodities, supplies and equipment during periods of road construction and repair.

- The following principles and considerations be addressed as a part of any capitalization plan for the Ohio Turnpike:
 - 1) Maintenance of the turnpike infrastructure and facilities, including overpass approaches associated with the turnpike;
 - 2) Increased stress and traffic on local roads, and resultant safety concerns;
 - 3) Accountability to citizens and local businesses;
 - 4) Economic viability of surrounding communities;
 - 5) Increase in tolls without a corresponding increase in maintenance or infrastructure;
 - 6) Property tax implications; and
 - 7) Revenue should be distributed over the length of the agreements.
- ODOT moving quickly to implement planned projects to provide economic development opportunities to underserved areas, for example, southeastern Ohio where highway access is limited.

We oppose:

- The term “highway and road purposes” as used in Ohio Department of Transportation easements being altered to include use for commercial advertising or cellular phone towers.
- The privatization of the Ohio Turnpike.

Discussion Questions

1. How have your family’s transportation requirements for personal *and* business use changed over the past few years (or family generations)? Is it easier to get people, goods and services from one point to another in 2016 than it was in 1900 in your neighborhood?
2. Describe the availability of the following modes of transportation accessible to you in your region - Highway, rail, waterway and air. What should be the importance of each in helping meet general consumer needs for travel, as well as those supporting agriculture, business and industry?
3. Many community stakeholders know that agriculture is more than just a business, it’s a way of life. How could branching out into other production areas beyond food and fiber impact family tradition, culture and the perception of farming in the community?
4. While most parts of the highway and inland waterway system are government owned and funded, many aspects of rail and air transportation are owned by private business. Development and operation of modes are governed in part by varying degrees of regulation. Should and could roads and waterways be open to private investment; should and could rail and air transport be developed by government?
5. Given Farm Bureau’s vision, policy and experience, what leadership position should the organization take in working with other stakeholders when it comes to refitting the transportation system on local, state and national levels?
6. Is there a pressing transportation concern in your neighborhood? As local stakeholders, how would your community council like to work with county Farm Bureau leadership to address this subject?