



Farm Bureau Today and Tomorrow

Defining the Issue

It all started with efforts in county organizations throughout the nation. Growing interest and support from farmers representing 76 county Farm Bureaus led to the creation of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation in 1919. Soon afterward, farmers from 30 states gathered in Chicago and founded the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Speaking for themselves through their own organization, Farm Bureau soon became recognized as *the voice of agriculture* at local, state and national levels.

As the organization enters a new century of service, what values do your community council members identify as the basic foundation for the organization, and what challenges and opportunities do you see for the future?

AFBF Policy

Purpose of Farm Bureau - Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization governed by and representing farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement and, thereby, to promote the national well-being. Farm Bureau is local, county, state, national and international in its scope and influence and is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. Farm Bureau is the voice of agricultural producers at all levels.

Farm Bureau Beliefs

- America's unparalleled progress is based on freedom and dignity of the individual, sustained by basic moral and religious concepts.
- Economic progress, cultural advancement, ethical and religious principles flourish best where people are free, responsible individuals.
- Individual freedom and opportunity must not be sacrificed in a quest for guaranteed "security."
- We believe in government by legislative and constitutional law, impartially administered, without special privilege.
- We believe in the representative form of government—a republic—as provided in our Constitution, in limitations on government power, in maintenance of equal opportunity, in the right of each individual to freedom of worship and in freedom of speech, press and peaceful assembly.
- We believe that the basic principles of Americanism—with emphasis upon freedom, dignity and the responsibility of the individual, and our private competitive enterprise system—should be taught in the schools.

- Individuals have a moral responsibility to help preserve freedom for future generations by participating in public affairs and by helping to elect candidates who share their fundamental beliefs and principles.
- People have the right and the responsibility to speak for themselves individually or through organizations of their choice without coercion or government intervention.
- Property rights are among the human rights essential to the preservation of individual freedom.
- We believe in the right of every person to choose an occupation; to be rewarded according to his/her contribution to society; to save, invest or spend; and to convey his/her property to heirs. Each person has the responsibility to meet financial obligations incurred.
- We believe that legislation and regulations favorable to all sectors of agriculture should be aggressively developed in cooperation with allied groups possessing common goals.
- We support the right of private organizations to require membership as a prerequisite for member services.

OFBF Policy

Ohio Farm Bureau - The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation is an independent, voluntary organization of Ohio farmers and community stakeholders 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 a 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, production methods, 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 and community stakeholders to join the organization.

We encourage counties to conduct outreach and education for community 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 community 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 support the county and state Farm Bureaus to place the words "Buy American" on all Farm Bureau publications and websites.

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 the funding and programs conducted by Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation, including the administration of funds to support animal issues, agricultural law issues and scholarship programs in each county. We encourage county Farm Bureaus to work with the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation to achieve their charitable objectives.

Ohio Farm Bureau should improve membership accounting systems to permit members to have their annual dues automatically billed to a credit card if desired. This billing would include an automatic renewal each year until such time as the member requests cancellation.

Discussion Questions

1. What do your community council members see as Farm Bureau's greatest assets at the local, state and national levels?
2. What do your community council members see as Farm Bureau's biggest challenges at the local, state and national levels?
3. How should Farm Bureau celebrate its activities and accomplishments in your community? How would you like to be involved in these efforts?