



## Community Council Newsletter

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Hello Everyone,

We've had a wet fall, and winter is on the way. I hope your family and friends have some time for some lively discussion at several *Farm Bureau Community Council* meetings over the next few months.

The enclosed packet has six new discussion guides, four of which feature issues briefings directly from American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) policy. These topics that should give your group a few options for their meetings into spring. Topics for discussion include:

#### ***Agricultural Labor and Federal Immigration Reform***

Agriculture needs a program that functions as efficiently as the current free market movement of migrant farm workers while providing the security of a contractual relationship in areas where there is little migration. Having lost confidence in the H-2A structure as a framework for future success, Farm Bureau is seeking a new approach to ensure a legal, reliable, long-term workforce for all sectors of the industry. What new, innovative approaches should the federal government consider as they look at creating a more flexible, employer-friendly migrant worker program for US agriculture?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *AFBF Website – Agricultural Labor Reform*: Explore more about current regulations, economic impacts and potential solutions at: <https://www.fb.org/issues/immigration-reform/agriculture-labor-reform/>
- *The Hill – US Farmers Need Sound Immigration Policy*: In the United States, foreign workers play a critical role in the production of our nation's food supply. As Congress struggles with the contentious issue of illegal immigration, it is important that legislators consider the disastrous consequence if no workers show up to grow, harvest and ship our nation's fruits and vegetables, even if only for one season. More insight at: <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/368486-us-farmers-need-sound-immigration-policy-for-agricultural-workforce>
- *Bloomberg Opinion – US Farms Can't Compete Without Foreign Workers*: Efforts to create a more straightforward agricultural-workers visa that would enable foreign workers to stay longer in the U.S. and change jobs within the industry have so far failed in Congress. If this doesn't change, American businesses, communities and consumers will be the losers. More insight at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-06-01/u-s-farms-need-more-immigrant-workers>

#### ***Biotechnology from Farm to Market***

Despite rapid adoption by farmers and a strong scientific consensus that biotechnology does not pose health and environmental risks, regulatory burdens are slowing research and innovation of new

biotech traits. In addition, activist groups are blocking science-based regulatory decisions, filing spurious lawsuits and advocating for labeling mandates. These actions are impacting the use of biotech and an effective production tool, as well as starting to erode U.S. agriculture's leadership position in the international marketplace. Sound science or consumer preference? Which train of thought should craft food production policy? How could policymakers strike a "balance" between these positions?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *AFBF Website – Biotechnology*: This section of the AFBF website contains a variety of infographics and briefing materials on the subject. Gather additional information at <https://www.fb.org/issues/technology/biotechnology/>
- *USDA – Biotechnology*: Advances in science, many of them from scientists at USDA or through research funded by USDA, have opened up new options for farmers responding to market needs and environmental challenges. Many new plant varieties being developed or grown by farmers have been produced using genetic engineering. These techniques are included in what is often referred to as "biotechnology" or "modern biotechnology." More information at: <https://www.usda.gov/topics/biotechnology>
- *The Nature Education Knowledge Project*: Have you ever wondered where our agricultural crops come from? And what were they like thousands of years ago, or hundreds of years ago? Our food crops today are in fact very different from the original wild plants from which they were derived. Discover more at: <https://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/history-of-agricultural-biotechnology-how-crop-development-25885295>

### ***Exploring Global Climate Change***

Environmental organizations and some scientists contend that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activities are the principal cause for an increase in average global temperatures. They argue that unless measures are taken to reduce these emissions, the cumulative effect over coming decades will result in adverse changes in the world's climate and weather. GHGs include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane. AFBF policy Farm Bureau recognizes there may be an increase in occurrences of extreme weather. It is not clear if this is due to natural global climate cycles or other factors, such as GHGs.

While AFBF has organization policy discussing climate change, should the Ohio Farm Bureau look more closely at the issue? What points should county Farm Bureau members consider as they provide advice and input through the Policy Development process?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *AFBF Website – Climate Change*: This section of the AFBF website contains additional background information and a *Climate Change Factsheet*. <https://www.fb.org/issues/regulatory-reform/climate-change/>
- *US EPA – Agriculture and Climate*: Climate change refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time. In other words, climate change includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among other effects, that occur over several decades or longer. More resources available at: <https://www.epa.gov/agriculture/agriculture-and-climate>

- *USDA Economic Research Service – National Climate Assessment*: The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) aims "to assist the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change." In this role, every four years it produces a National Climate Assessment (NCA) that surveys and synthesizes the most recent science about climate change impacts and adaptation in the United States. More at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/natural-resources-environment/climate-change/agriculture-and-climate-change/>

### ***Federal Regulatory Reform***

Farm Bureau strongly believes that all Americans, including farmers and ranchers, need a regulatory system that is fair and transparent, adheres to the will of Congress, takes economic impacts into account, and respects our freedoms. How do you council members define “fair,” “transparent” and the “will of Congress?”

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *AFBF Website – Regulatory Reform*: This section of the AFBF website contains a variety of issues papers and additional briefing materials on the subject. Gather additional information at <https://www.fb.org/issues/regulatory-reform/agriculture-and-regulatory-reform/>
- *Regulatory Reform at USDA*: The USDA is committed to creating a culture of consistent, efficient service to our customers while easing regulatory burdens to make it easier to invest, produce, and build in rural America in a way that creates jobs and economic prosperity while ensuring the safety of our food supply, and protecting and safeguarding our land, water, and other natural resources for future generations. USDA's Regulatory Reform Task Force will identify opportunities for easing the regulatory burden on the American people and improving service delivery to our customers. More information available at: <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/regulatory-reform>

### ***Land Grant Universities – Strategies for Effective Partnerships***

Land grant universities provide the catalyst for our nation’s public higher education system. The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 have created a system of over 300 institutions that bring science, technology and the arts to the American people. The Ohio State University (OSU) was created under provisions of the 1862 legislation. In 2014 Central State University (CSU) near Wilberforce, Ohio received designation as an 1890 land-grant institution.

Many states have successful partnerships between 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions. As their respective Extension programs work together, partnerships will be built, and new community engagement opportunities will be developed. How should CSU and OSU Extension position themselves to become a model for collaboration and teamwork for the nation?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *Association of Public and Land Grant Universities*: Learn more about land grant institutions at: <http://www.aplu.org/about-us/history-of-aplu/what-is-a-land-grant-university/index.html>
- *OFBF Website – Central State University Cultivates its Land Grant Status*: You don’t have to look too far on Central State University’s campus to see big changes since the southwestern Ohio

school became the second land-grant university in the state. More information at: <https://ofbf.org/2018/03/13/central-state-cultivates-land-grant-status/>

- *Ohio State University Extension*: No matter which county you visit, you can find people who are helped by the four major OSU Extension program areas: family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, community development, and agriculture and natural resources. Extension provides practical advice, sensible solutions, and realistic down-to-earth answers for all Ohioans. More information can be found at: <https://extension.osu.edu/about>
- *Central State University Extension*: CSUE's mission is to become a premier community-based outreach and educational program leader that provides a holistic Extension approach to improve the overall conditions facing families in rural and urban communities and addressing agricultural issues in rural and urban locations. More information can be found at: <http://www.centralstate.edu/academics/cse/agriculture/index10.php?num=28>

### ***Railroad Development in Ohio***

No one can argue the importance of Class I and local rail transportation infrastructure to Ohio. Thousands of carloads of raw materials, agricultural products, fuels and finished consumer goods moved by rail touch thousands of jobs in Ohio.

No one can argue that rail transportation has a variety of “growing pains,” too. While some Ohio communities have Class I train stoppages across key rail crossings, other towns with local lines concerned about what options, if any, they will have to economically transport materials if these railroads cease local operations.

Given a myriad of federal and state regulations, the need for local guidance as well as the issues, opportunities and challenges involved, how can we create a balanced relationship between railroads and local communities?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *Association of American Railroads – Service to Agriculture*: Find out more about the challenges and opportunities for Class I and local carriers railroads serving agriculture, along with downloadable factsheets at: <https://www.aar.org/issue/freight-rail-agriculture-industry/>
- *Appalachian Regional Commission – Short Line Railroads*: Read more about how rail infrastructure impacts rural communities and economic development. The article focuses on several areas of Ohio: [https://www.arc.gov/magazine/articles.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=56](https://www.arc.gov/magazine/articles.asp?ARTICLE_ID=56)
- *Bucyrus, Ohio Telegraph Forum – Ohio Trains Can Block Crossings Without Local Fines*: Railroad companies that leave trains blocking Ohio roads might no longer be fined by local governments after an order by a federal judge in 2017. More information at: <https://www.bucyrustelegraphforum.com/story/news/2017/06/08/judge-ohio-trains-can-block-crossings-without-local-fines/379861001/>
- *PUCO – Railroad Industry Information*: The PUCO, in conjunction with the Ohio Rail Development Commission, is responsible for ensuring the safety of motorists at the more than 5,700 grade crossings in Ohio. More information at: <https://www.puco.ohio.gov/information-by-industry/railroad-industry-information/> The PUCO has no authority over blocked rail crossings,

but is collecting blocked crossing information on behalf of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The FRA intends to use the data generated to analyze the ongoing and nationwide issue of blocked rail crossings. You can submit rail safety issues to the PUCO Rail Division using information and directions found at: <https://www.puco.ohio.gov/puco-forms/report-blocked-crossings-to-federal-railroad-administration/>

**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](mailto: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 -". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

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