

January-February 2009

JOIN IOWA FARMERS UNION IN WORKING ON AG AND RURAL LIFE ISSUES AT THE IOWA CAPITOL IN 2009



The holidays are behind us and the Iowa General Assembly will return to the Capitol on January 12. Iowa Farmers Union board has selected their 2009 Legislative Priorities and we hope you will look at the list and get ready to help us accomplish our goals. The more people who visit the Capitol, contact their legislators, write letters to the editor and attend forums, the more successful we will be. **Now is the time for action.**

While legislators will be busy dealing with declining revenues and rebuilding areas of the state hit by summer floods, there are many other things that they could do that would improve Iowa's environment and the rural quality of life. One way for the state to save money is to not fund the Iowa State University Odor Control Study approved by the Legislature in 2008. Similar research has already been done here and in other states and countries. This would save Iowa \$22 million.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

The Legislature will be focusing on rebuilding parts of Iowa hurt by flooding. We need to encourage our legislators to take steps to prevent future flooding such as promoting more buffer strips, grass waterways and terraces. Also, we need regulations to prevent future flooding by prohibiting development of animal feeding operations in flood plains.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE INDEPENDENT LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING

Iowa is very short of small livestock processing facilities, which makes it difficult for small farmers. We need to encourage the appropriation of start up funds for new facilities. Also, we support requiring CAFO manure storage pits paying property taxes and having CAFO buildings zoned industrial if the animals are not owned by the farmer.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Iowa is moving toward large scale energy independence, but we still need to make changes to help locally owned and controlled renewable energy cooperatives as well as locally owned generating facilities under 20 megawatts. To be truly energy independent, Iowa needs to develop interconnection standards that support electric generation, particularly on farms and in rural areas.

IMPROVING RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE

When Iowa receives infrastructure funds from the federal government, we will encourage directing those funds toward rebuilding bridges and outdated sewer systems in rural communities. In today's economy we feel that in case of supplier bankruptcy, there is a need to protect farmers from losses due to prepaying for chemicals, fertilizer and other inputs. Another goal is to promote sustainable local food systems and to require state institutions to purchase locally grown food when available.

See Page 3 for instructions regarding contacting your legislators.



Judie Hoffman and Tom Buis

Iowa Farmers Union Mission is to strengthen the independent family farm through education, legislation, and cooperation. Our Goal is to achieve sustainable production, safe foods,

President's Report



**Chris Petersen,
IFU President**

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Grassroots is the official publication of the Iowa Farmers Union. It is published six times a year as a service to its members. Annual membership is \$50.

I hope all is well with each of you and that your lives are settling into their normal daily rhythms after the holidays. As we turn from mid-winter holiday celebrations to closer examinations of our newly elected officials; I have reached the conclusion that winter is as unpredictable as newly elected politicians can be. Here it is only early January and I imagine we are already yearning for an early spring. Let's hope we won't feel the same way about the politicians and want another election shortly.

Our Secretary-to-be Vilsack has been given the golden opportunities of a farmer approaching an ideal spring with perfect weather for top yields down the road. Vilsack is taking his post in a time of sobering challenges with an opportunity to achieve much needed changes along the way. I sincerely hope, as the second Iowan in history to take this post, he realizes this by remembering Henry Wallace and his legacy. Vilsack has been reminded of this privately and in the media. I could not take the chance that he would not remember and so personally brought it to his attention myself.

How is it that the vast majority of politicians do not have enough intestinal fortitude to directly address the issues? I recall a skit on Saturday Night Live that aired last October in which the character responded to a politician by repeating numerous time pleading "fix it", "just fix it." Unfortunately, there is no easy fix to the problems we currently face in rural America.

Politicians claim to be "leaders." A few of them even deserve the title having earned it through ethical and honest means. The fact is the true leaders are and should be all of us - *the voters*. As constituents we have the power to hire, fire, and persuade our elected public servants. In order for our needs to be both listened and attended to in Des Moines or Washington DC we must have our facts in order and be firm in our efforts to be heard.

We have a new President, a new Congress, and here in Iowa our Governor has a new legislature. Be courteous, be factual, make yourselves heard, and be proud of our Farmers Union policy, strength, and resolve. After all there is finally hope for change! Now is the time to rise up and be a voice for change in agriculture and our national food policy. Let's get to work! Judie Hoffman is our advocate and lobbyist in the statehouse Judie's e-mail address is judiehoffman@yahoo.com or call and discuss your concerns and ideas with Amber in our State Office at 800-775-5227.

Raise Your Hand! Become Involved! Join one of Iowa Farmers Union Committee's

Become an active participant for change in rural Iowa! Volunteer to sit on a committee and be involved in making Iowa Farmers Union stronger and more effective in its mission and goals. Member involvement is the key to keeping IFU on track in its ongoing efforts to stay focused and make sure our legislative and educational agenda moves forward in ways that support sustainable production, safe foods, a clean environment, and healthy communities

Membership

Fundraising

Event Coordination (Booster Club and Convention)

Policy (Legislative)

PAC

Publicity and Action

CALL NOW! 800-775-5227



BUDGET CUTS HERE AND BUDGET CUTS THERE ADD UP TO BIG CUTS

Governor Culver and Iowa Legislators will be spending a lot of time working on budgets this sessions. It will be a hot topic and they will be faced with difficult decisions. This is not just an Iowa problem. Forty-three other states are facing similar problems, many much greater than those of Iowa.

Late last year Governor Culver made initial cuts of \$77 million in the 2009 budget (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2009), and recently he announced across the board cuts of 1.5% in all areas of state spending starting January 1. The latter will save an additional \$91.4 million. Culver's hope is that these cuts will be enough to balance the budget for the current year, but because the state must have a balanced budget, the Legislature may be called on to make further cuts.

January 13, Gov. Culver will present his Condition of the State address to the Legislature. Because the estimated revenue for 2010 is lower that 2009, the governor will have to present a budget that is even lower than the reduced 2009 budget. That will not be easy since there are a number of built in increases such as funding for K-12 education, state salaries, funding to counties and Medicaid.

Submitted by Judie Hoffman



Contact Your Legislators

E-MAIL

When you e-mail legislators, make sure to include your name and address so the legislator knows you live in her or his district.

The generic form of e-mail address for legislators is:

first name, period, last name of the legislator, then @legis.state.ia.us.

Also, you can link with them through the Legislative Web Site <http://www.legis.state.ia.us>. Example: Mark.Smith@legis.state.ia.us

CALL

Governor's Office 515-281-5211 or email at: contact.igov@iowa.gov

Senate Switchboard 515-281-337when in session
House of Representatives Switchboard 515-281-3221 when in session

Leave your name and number, and your legislator will return your call.

WRITE

The Honorable

Iowa Senate/House of Representatives
Iowa State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319



Sign up for Carbon Credits:

Additional income can be obtained through carbon credit contracts for practices on the farm. These include no-till, alfalfa, pasture, or forested areas. Visit <http://carboncredit.ndfu.org/> on the National Farmers Union website for more information. This program is not government funded, instead credits are publicly traded on the Chicago Climate Exchange.

Farmers Union's Carbon Credit Program allows ag producers and landowners to earn income by storing carbon in their soil through no-till crop production, conversion of cropland to grass, sustainable management of native rangelands and tree plantings on previously non-forested or degraded land. In addition, the capture of methane from anaerobic manure digester systems can also earn carbon credits.

Farmers Union has earned approval from the [Chicago Climate Exchange](#) to aggregate carbon offsets (carbon credits) and sell them on behalf of producers. Farmers Union enrolls producer acreage into blocks of marketable offsets that are traded on the Exchange, much like other agricultural commodities are sold. Proceeds from the sales are then forwarded to producers as each pool of carbon credits is marketed. National Farmers Union's Carbon Credit Program earned more than \$8 million for producers in its first two year of operation.

If you need help with the form, call the office staff at 800-775-5227

Iowa Farmers Union Events and News

Up Coming Events

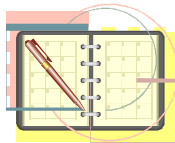
IFU Booster Club, details are coming. **Your Donations Support Iowa Farmers Union Legislative and Lobbying Efforts.**

Contact us if you would like to be a host for \$100 per person.

February 6-7: Iowa Network for Community Agriculture Conference "Connecting the Dots", Clear Lake, Iowa

Lobby Day 2009, 10 February, 2009

More listening sessions will be scheduled. Call the state office at 800-775-5227 if you would like us to plan one in your area. Subject matter will be tailored to issues specific to your needs. Local Foods, renewable energy, CAFOs, are just a few of the rural issues we have been discussing with folk around Iowa.



Lobby Day

Plan to Attend!

We will hold our **2009 Legislative Lobby Day** in cooperation with the Iowa Environmental Council.

Tuesday, February 10

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.













Capital Rotunda

Tell A Friend!

There is strength in numbers. We need a strong membership if we want our voice to be heard or to influence the changes that need to be made both here in Iowa and in Washington DC. Encourage a friend to become a part of the force for change in rural America.

Membership information can be found on the Iowa Farmers Union Website or on the following page.



Bacon One Pound  Retail \$2.99 Farmer \$0.42	Top Sirloin Steak One Pound  Retail \$7.99 Farmer \$0.80	Bread One Pound Loaf  Retail \$2.99 Farmer \$0.12	Beer 6-Pack Cans  Retail \$5.69 Farmer \$0.11
Fresh Carrots Two Pounds  Retail \$2.99 Farmer \$0.76	Cereal 16 Ounce Box  Retail \$4.49 Farmer \$0.09	Cheddar Cheese One Pound  Retail \$5.79 Farmer \$1.59	Eggs One Dozen A-XL  Retail \$3.99 Farmer \$1.00
Flour Five Pounds  Retail \$2.89 Farmer \$0.62	Boneless Ham Price per Pound  Retail \$4.29 Farmer \$0.42	Lettuce One Head (Two Pounds)  Retail \$1.99 Farmer \$0.44	Milk One Gallon, fat free  Retail \$3.75 Farmer \$1.27
Potato Chips Lays Classic 13.5 oz.  Retail \$3.99 Farmer \$0.07	Fresh Potatoes Ten Pounds, Russet  Retail \$3.99 Farmer \$0.77	Soda Two Liter Bottle  Retail \$1.49 Farmer \$0.07	<p><i>The Farmer's Share</i></p>

Moving?

New Email Address?

Give us a call at
800-775-5227

or send an e-mail to info@iowafarmersunion.org with your new contact information, so your *Grassroots* newsletter and other IFU mailings will continue to arrive in your mailbox without interruption!

New! Iowa tax credit for contributions of land for conservation

Thanks to new legislation passed in 2008, Iowa taxpayers can now claim a substantial Iowa tax credit when they donate to a qualified conservation organization:

Land for conservation purposes (full value or bargain sale), or **Conservation easements**.

How much credit can I receive?

- 50% of the fair market value of the donated property interest
- Maximum tax credit of \$100,000

In other words, if you donate land or easements valued at \$200,000, you can subtract \$100,000 from your Iowa income tax payment.

What if my tax credit is more than the state income tax I owe this year?

Any credit that exceeds your Iowa income tax liability for the tax year of the donation may be credited to next year. And this "carry-over" can be claimed for up to 20 years or until the full tax credit for your donation is claimed — whichever is earlier.

What if my donation is worth more than \$200,000?

A donation valued at \$200,000 would give you the maximum tax credit of \$100,000. If your donation exceeds \$200,000, you can claim an Iowa itemized deduction for the remaining value.

How is this new tax credit different?

You used to be able to claim an **itemized deduction** on both your state and federal income taxes for your donation of land for conservation. Now you can claim a **state tax credit**, which greatly increases your state tax savings. Plus you can still claim your itemized federal deduction for a conservation-related donation. For more information on federal tax incentives available for conservation-related donations, see [the Land Trust Alliance website](#).

What kind of land donation qualifies for this tax credit?

- Donation must be in land in Iowa
- Donation must be made in 2008 tax year or later

Must be "conveyed as an unconditional charitable donation in perpetuity to a qualified organization exclusively for conservation purposes." These definitions align with the [federal IRS rules for donating land or land value for conservation](#).

What if my donated land is not owned solely by me as an individual?

An individual may claim the credit for donating land that was held in partnership, a limited liability company, S corporation, or an estate or trust electing to have the income taxed directly to the individual. The amount you can claim is based on your pro-rata share of your earnings of the partnership, limited liability company, S corporation or estate or trust.

How to claim the tax credit?

- Use the Form IA 148 "Tax Credits Schedule."
- Attach a copy of Federal Form 8283 "Noncash Charitable Contributions" which shows how you calculated the value of your donation. (You'll attach this same form to your federal tax return to claim your federal itemized deduction.)

You'll need a qualified appraisal to claim a tax credit or deduction on a donation valued at more than \$5,000. The appraisal date needs to be within 90 days before or after the date you sign the deed or easement.

NOTE: If you claim more than one kind of tax credit, you need to deduct the tax credits in a particular sequence.

More details are available on the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation website.
<http://www.inhf.org/landowner/index.htm>

✓ **YES! I want to help Farmers Union protect the family farm, the integrity of our food supply, and our state's environment.**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Town, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- Save your stamp, I would like to receive my *Grassroots* newsletter electronically.

- _____ \$50 for 1-year full membership
 _____ \$80 for 2-year full membership
 _____ \$150 for 4-year full membership
 _____ \$25 for one-year "Friend of the Family Farmer" consumer membership (non-voting, limited benefits; \$65 for 3 years, \$100 for 5 years).
 _____ \$15 for one-year student membership (non-voting, limited benefits, students 16 years and older).

- Check payable to IFU enclosed.

Please mail form and payment to:

**Iowa Farmers Union
 PO Box 8988
 Ames, IA 50014-8988**

If you prefer to pay by credit card or PayPal, visit
[www.iowafarmersunion.org/Join Us](http://www.iowafarmersunion.org/JoinUs).

Questions? Contact us!

800-775-5227 FAX 832-575-5227
info@iowafarmersunion.org



Jefferson County Good Neighbor Guidelines

Iowa has a long and strong agricultural tradition, with crop and livestock farming representing an important and integral part of the Iowa economy and its way of life. Unfortunately, the growth of modern, industrialized agricultural can carry with it undesirable side effects that impinge our quality of life. Jefferson County Farm and Neighbors or JFAN is a non-profit community coalition of rural and town residents and traditional family farmers whose common goal is to protect the quality of life for all current and future residents of Jefferson County through the promotion of sound livestock practices that ensure a clean environment, health to its residents, and the preservation of local property values.

Recently, local livestock farmers approached JFAN and requested guidelines for the building of acceptable livestock confinements within the County. JFAN is a strong supporter of sustainable livestock farming methods and encourages all livestock operations to embrace Good neighbor Guidelines, which were developed in response to such requests. It is JFAN's hope that they be adopted by anyone intending to build new confined livestock operations of any size within Jefferson County.,

These guidelines do not override, but are meant to augment all Department of Natural Resources (DNR) rules and regulations. Additionally, while we believe the Master Matrix that has been adopted by the County falls short of appropriate guidelines, particularly in the way it is scored, we do support the spirit of the Master Matrix and believe its guidelines should apply to all confinement operations, regardless of size. Finally, the Iowa Pork Producers Association has developed its own "Best Management Practices", which are also strongly supported, and are included verbatim, in the best management practices section of these guidelines.

JFAN is not a regulatory body and cannot commit for the Jefferson County community as a whole. Ultimately, Iowa may enact strong local control laws, legislation that JFAN and IFU have supported. In the interim, it is JFAN's belief that these guidelines, if adopted by the local livestock community, will result in substantially improved communications between livestock operators and residents, a safer and more enjoyable environment to live in for everyone, and in areas where a CAFO/SAFO is acceptable for the County and its residents, a path to construction and operation that is smoother and less costly for the operator/owner.

A complete listing of Good Neighbor guidelines and best management practices can be found on the JFAN website the address is jfaniowa.org/Good-Neighbor-Guidelines.html

Wait, I've more questions

Alan Guebert

Wow, the end is here and I still have questions.

Questions like, of the more than \$300 billion of taxpayer money doled out to stupid bankers and Wall Street nitwits in one form (bailout) or another (stock purchases), where'd the money go after it got into their shaky hands?

The Associated Press asked the biggest beggars the same question recently and the answer it received from nearly every one was a cold, silent stare.

Why the silence?

Simple; under terms negotiated between the begging bankers (they were in a position to negotiate?) and Secretary The-Sky-Is-Falling Paulson no bank is required to account where the loot—yours and mine: are we chumps or what?—went.

Want to feel like an even bigger chump? Look at one the biggest bank bums, Citigroup, and its former Washington, now Wall Street, rainmaker Robert Rubin, Treasury secretary during the Clinton Administration.

In the last two years Citi has seen its market capitalization plunge from \$244 billion to under \$20 billion, fired more than 75,000 employees and, of course, soaked you and me for billions in bailout money.

Despite that disastrous performance, wanna' bet Rubin raked it in? Don't; since his arrival at Citi, Mr. Inside has pocketed salary and bonuses totaling \$115 million.

What, you didn't do as well when the price of your stock—cows, pigs and leftover grain—took a Citi-sized header this summer?

Another question about Wall Street slicksters: If and when I bilk you and your fellow farmers out of \$50 billion or so, would you please ask the arraignment judge to put me under house arrest in the \$10 million Park Avenue penthouse that you dopes paid for?

Thank you. Suckers.

Speaking of paid-for dope, recall this summer when every farm manager with a cell phone holster urged farmers to reserve 2009 anhydrous ammonia at \$1,200 per ton because if you didn't you "wouldn't get it"?

Anybody not get anhydrous this fall? Huh, funny how that works, eh?

Wasn't the same "won't-get" scam being run in seed this fall? (Hint: Not anymore. Those early December, \$300-per-bag seed corn prices suddenly dropped to under \$200 by month's end. Or, as President Bush almost explained once, "Fool me once...")

And what about the 13-pound, er, page, anvil the American Soybean Association dropped on the

head of its one-time child, the United Soybean Board, a couple' weeks before Christmas? I mean, the ASA wants USDA to audit the soybean checkoff and its USB masters for alleged "wasteful and excessive spending" and "improper conduct"

Surely there hasn't been any shenanigans at USB even though it has collected and spent \$558 million of your money—nearly \$53 million last year; one-half of 1 percent of the "net market price" of beans in the teens sure adds up—since 1992, right?

And so what if ASA's allegations against USB include, according to DTN's Chris Clayton, no-bid contracts, "inappropriate relationships," "brandished" knives, public intoxication and "political games" between USDA, USB and ASA?

(Are there enough initials in my columns?)

Wanna' read about this?

So would I but nobody—not ASA, USB or USDA—has made any of condemning correspondence public. Yes, it's your money and, yes, a public institution, USDA, has oversight of all federally-mandated checkoffs.... and what was your point?

Did you see where the giant milk cooperative Dairy Farmers of America ended a Commodity Futures Trading Commission investigation into the coop's suspicious, 2004 futures trading at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange in exchange for \$12 million from DFA members and some of its former executives?

Why? No one knows; do you?

Maybe the new year—and the new Administration—will bring some new answers.

© 2008 ag comm. Alan Guebert is an award-winning freelance agricultural journalist whose weekly column, *The Farm & Food File*, appears in more than 70 publications nationwide.

We Know Good Food.

THE CO-OP ADVANTAGE

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Fax: 832-575-5227

We're on the web!

www.iowafarmersunion.org

Standing up for Family Farmers!

Farmers Union Members Make the News in Norway

Richard Holstad and Jim Berge make front page news in a Bergen Norway Newspaper! Reporter Frode B. traveled from Norway to interview Iowa farmers about local culture, history, and farming methods. Berge says "The reporter was amazed with Iowa agriculture and saw soy beans for the first time". To see the entire article use the following address:

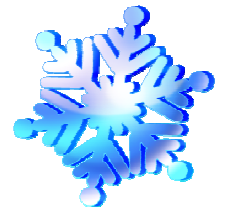


Have you been missing out?

If you're an IFU member and don't have your email address on file with IFU, ***you're missing important updates and action alerts!***

Email has proven to be one of our most effective means of communication, and we've love to include you in future contacts. Your information will be kept safe and secure.

Send an e-mail to info@iowafarmersunion.com or call the state office at 800-775-5227



Website: www.iowafarmersunion.org

Email: info@iowafarmersunion.org

Fax: 832-575-5227

Phone: 800-775-5227

For Rural Iowa!

Standing Up

Iowa Farmers Union!

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