



2017 Legislative Policy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.....PREAMBLE

3.....FEDERAL ISSUES

3.....AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITION

- 3.....Agriculture & the Farm Program
- 4.....Beginning Farmer Incentives
- 4.....Checkoff Programs
- 4.....Commodity Reserves
- 5.....Corporate Farms & Monopolies
- 5.....Crop Insurance
- 6.....Farm Credit
- 6.....Farm Safety
- 7.....International Trade
- 7.....Labeling & Animal Identification
- 8.....Livestock Production Practices
- 8.....Local Food Systems
- 9.....Marketing
- 10.....Marketing Boards
- 10.....Meat & Grain Grading & Inspection
- 11.....Nutrition
- 11.....Seed Industry

13.....ENERGY, LAND USE, CONSERVATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

- 13.....Chemicals & Additives
- 13.....Energy
- 15.....Genetically Modified Organisms & Biotechnology
- 16.....Global Climate Change
- 16.....Rural Utility Cooperatives
- 17.....Soil & Water Conservation

19.....RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMY

- 19.....Communications
- 19.....Cooperatives
- 19.....Defense Spending
- 20.....Education
- 20.....Employment for Disabled Americans
- 20.....Experience Works (Green Thumb Program)
- 20.....Farm-Labor Coalition
- 21.....Health Care
- 21.....Insurance
- 21.....OSHA
- 21.....Political Reform
- 22.....Postal Regulations

22.....Public Relations
 22.....Social Policies
 22.....Social Security
 23.....Taxation
 24.....Transportation

25.....STATE ISSUES

25.....AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITION

25.....Agriculture
 26.....Beginning Farmer Incentives
 26.....Checkoff Programs
 26.....Contract Farming
 27.....Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
 27.....Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
 27.....Livestock Production Practices
 27.....Local Food Systems
 29.....Research & Agriculture

30.....ENERGY, LAND USE, CONSERVATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

30.....Agricultural Chemicals
 31.....Eminent Domain
 31.....Energy
 32.....Environment
 33.....Genetically Modified Organisms & Biotechnology
 33.....Land Use Policies
 34.....Livestock Concentration
 38.....Nuisance Lawsuit Protection
 38.....Rural Electric Cooperatives
 38.....Rural Water
 38.....Water Quality
 38.....Wildlife Management

40.....RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMY

40.....Banking
 40.....Boycott
 40.....Cooperatives
 40.....Economic Development
 41.....Education
 41.....Elections
 41.....Family Issues
 41.....Health Care
 41.....Taxes
 42.....Transportation

1 **PREAMBLE**

2 Being duly elected and assembled, we the members of the Iowa Farmers Union present this
3 policy statement in order to identify the aims and purposes of our organization.

4 We fully support the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

5 Our purpose as embodied by the Farmers Union triangle is cooperation, education, and
6 legislation.

7 We believe that Farmers must work cooperatively to do those things that individuals
8 acting alone cannot do for themselves. Recognizing our historic involvement with farmer
9 owned and controlled cooperatives and their role in improving economic conditions for
10 family farmers; we reaffirm our commitment to the cooperative system.

11 We will endeavor to provide education to our members on issues and ideas important to
12 family farm agriculture. We will further endeavor to provide the general public with
13 information on the important role of family farm agriculture.

14 We will work closely with elected officials at the federal, state, and local level, to pursue
15 public policy that ensures a safe and stable food supply and economic conditions that
16 treat family farmers fairly.

17 Our historic focus and our ongoing concern is the continuation of the family farm system of
18 agriculture. We believe that it is in the best interests of the nation and the world to have
19 agricultural production in the hands of family farmers.

20 Our environment is best protected by family farmers, who have a long-term interest in
21 the productivity of the land and the safety and purity of our water.

22 Our communities are best served socially and economically by family farmers, who fully
23 participate in the commerce, government, and activities of their local community.

24 Our food supply's safety and affordability is best preserved by family farmers operating
25 in a fair and competitive market situation.

26 We believe, and real-life examples prove that when agricultural production is controlled by
27 corporations our environment, our communities and the safety and affordability of our food
28 supply are jeopardized.

29 The family farm system of agriculture cannot exist without a fair economic return for farmers.

30 We believe that food production represents a truly unique economic structure and as such
31 deserves special and unique consideration from the government.

32 The demand for food is universal and does not respond like other products to changes in
33 price. Food production decisions are made months in advance of the final marketing,
34 and therefore cannot be adjusted as prices rise or fall. Because the fixed costs are so
35 high, and because agricultural land cannot readily be transferred to another use, food
36 production does not voluntarily decrease in response to falling prices.

1 Food production is also uniquely affected by uncontrollable factors, such as the weather.

2 Because food is absolutely necessary for human life, governments have a responsibility to
3 ensure a stable, abundant, and safe supply of food for all people. Government programs in the
4 United States have largely been effective in ensuring a stable and adequate supply of food.
5 These programs have given Americans the least expensive, safest, and most abundant food
6 supply the world has ever seen. The failures of government programs should not be a rationale
7 for dismantling them, but rather a rationale for needed improvements.

8 The recommendations set forth in this policy statement are designed to reaffirm the family farm
9 structure as the primary agricultural system, to assure rural and urban stability, national
10 prosperity, the preservation of human and natural resources, and the dignity of the individual
11 and family.

1 **FEDERAL ISSUES**

2 **I. AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITION**

3 **Agriculture & the Farm Program**

4 The original goal of national farm policy was to provide equality of income for farm families
5 comparable to the average income of families in other segments of the society. We call upon
6 Congress to return to this goal.

7 We support a national food security policy that recognizes the imperative need for any nation,
8 but especially our nation, to place the first priority on the ability to feed itself as it wishes in order
9 to create security for its citizens. The United States must adopt policies that will maintain its
10 food supply independence.

11 Iowa Farmers Union favors a long-term predictable food and fiber program. We, therefore, urge
12 the United States Department of Agriculture to utilize the parity formula in determining all loan
13 prices. We reaffirm our basic commitment to the parity formula, using the base years (1910-1914)
14 established by law as the standard by which to determine prices for agricultural commodities that
15 are fair to farmers, ranchers, and the public. Efforts should be made to educate the public
16 regarding parity issues.

17 Until a long term food and fiber policy supported the National Farmers Union has been passed by
18 Congress, and signed into law by the President,

19 **WE SUPPORT:**

20 A. **Farm Program Payments.** Farm program payments should be tied to sound
21 stewardship and conservation practices and strict compliance with conservation plans.
22 Use of non-recourse loans should include loan rates set at levels to cover costs plus a
23 reasonable profit. Farm programs should utilize proven yields and crop suitability ratings
24 in determining payments. Farm ground should not be disqualified from the farm program
25 only on the basis of previous eligibility limits (such as ground enrolled in the
26 Conservation Reserve Program).

27 B. **Conservation Initiatives.** The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
28 should be targeted toward environmental incentives instead of simply reimbursing the
29 costs of pollution control systems. Efforts should be increased to enforce the
30 implementation of conservation plans for those participating in farm programs.
31 Government payments should be eliminated for habitual violators of environmental
32 standards. The Conservation Security Program should be fully implemented.
33 Conservation plans submitted for federal funding should be evaluated and prioritized
34 based on county and watershed level targets to maximize the conservation benefit
35 achieved for each dollar spent.

36 C. **Crop Insurance Availability.** While crop insurance alone does not constitute a sound
37 farm program, it should be a strong part of our food security efforts. Crop insurance
38 support should be offered to provide reasonable protection for farmers with coverage
39 available for commodities, livestock, specialty crops, organic production and diversified
40 operations.

1 D. **Reasonable Inventory Management.** Reasonable inventory management tools will
2 lead to a less expensive farm program. Farmer-owned and farmer-controlled reserves
3 should be utilized. The United States should pursue worldwide agreements to maintain
4 a world food reserve for humanitarian needs, while avoiding action that unfairly
5 depresses local market prices for farmers in the areas receiving aid.

6 E. **Tight Payment Limits.** Payments should be limited to benefit family-size operations
7 and payment limitations should be tightly enforced.

8 WE OPPOSE:

- 9 A. Foreign and/or non-family farm corporations participating in farm income support
10 programs.
11 B. Decoupling concepts and triple base programs.
12 C. Loss of a producer's base program acres because of utilizing fruit, vegetable, and other
13 non-program crops

14 **Beginning Farmer Incentives**

15 With the average age of the American farmer increasing, and historically high land prices and
16 input costs creating hardships for those who want to start farming, it is more important than ever
17 that our policies place special emphasis on assisting the next generation of family farmers and
18 ranchers. Therefore,

19 WE SUPPORT:

- 20 A. The use of conservation and farming easements to preserve farmland and make it more
21 affordable for beginning farmers.
22 B. Prioritizing easement models that preserve land affordability under the federal Farm and
23 Ranch Lands Protection Program.
24 C. Set asides for beginning farmers in existing federal programs, such as the Environmental
25 Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).
26 D. Improving credit opportunities for beginning farmers, including pre-approval of FSA loans
27 for beginning farmers.
28 E. Expanding and improving training for beginning farmers through the Beginning Farmer
29 and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP).
30 F. A federal program offering student loan forgiveness for beginning farmers.

31 **Checkoff Programs**

32 Commodity checkoff programs must be accountable to the needs of family farmers. All
33 commodity checkoffs should be voluntary at the point of sale. Mandatory referendums should be
34 conducted every 4 years. Checkoff funds should only be used toward marketing and research that
35 benefits family-sized producers. Checkoff funds should in no way be used for lobbying and
36 political activities. Checkoff funds should not be comingled in any way with funds used for
37 lobbying or political activity.

38 **Commodity Reserves**

39 WE SUPPORT:

- 1 A. Isolating strategic food reserves from the market by enforcing provisions of not releasing
2 commodities below 110% of parity and not calling reserves below 130% of parity. We
3 urge Congress to fund current reserve programs.
- 4 B. On-farm storage payments equal to commercial storage rates.
- 5 C. Farmer-owned strategic reserves, with a cap on the number of bushels any individual
6 farmer could hold.
- 7 D. U.S. participation in a world strategic food reserve addressing fair and free trade to
8 stabilize world farm income.

9 **Corporate Farms & Monopolies**

10 Large corporate enterprises are moving into the production of agricultural commodities at an
11 alarming rate. Their volume and financial ties tend to deprive family farmers of an equal
12 opportunity for profitable production of agricultural commodities. Therefore,

13 WE SUPPORT:

- 14 A. Federal enforcement of current antitrust legislation.
- 15 B. Implementation of new antitrust initiatives to stop concentration in the meat packing
16 industry.
- 17 C. Consideration of a coalition of farm organizations to take legal action to force the federal
18 government to enforce antitrust laws.
- 19 D. Federal legislation that would prohibit any packer ownership and/or contract feeding of
20 livestock.
- 21 E. Limiting control by any one corporation or individual to 5% of production of any ag product.
- 22 F. Enforcing antitrust laws regarding the seed and ag chemical industry.
- 23 G. Banning foreign and/or non-farm corporate ownership of agricultural land.

24 **Crop Insurance**

25 Crop insurance and revenue coverage should never be considered a replacement for fair market
26 prices and an adequate price support program. We support the continuation and improvement of
27 the federal crop insurance program. We also support:

- 28 A. The permanent disaster program, which addresses both catastrophic and less than
29 catastrophic losses. We encourage congress to remodel the current program to improve
30 its effectiveness.
- 31 B. Development of new products that allow producers to protect their income in time of low
32 prices and/or quality losses.
- 33 C. Development of products that allow producers to better protect against livestock and
34 livestock feed losses.
- 35 D. Final sign-up for crop insurance in the Midwest region should be April 15.
- 36 E. Targeting of subsidies toward farmer benefits and protection of farmer assets.
- 37 F. Implementation of Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) in Iowa for specialty crop
38 production, organic production and diversified operations.
- 39 G. Implementation of a national system of premium buy-downs for beginning farmers.
- 40 H. Conservation compliance as a requirement to receive federally subsidized crop
41 insurance.
- 42 I. Limiting federal crop insurance premium subsidies to a level that targets support to
43 family-scale farms and avoids subsidizing expansion and consolidation of farm
44 ownership by mega farms and non-farm investors.

1 J. Inversely indexing crop insurance premium subsidies to the size of the operation.

2 **Farm Credit**

3 We oppose high interest rates as a means to control inflation. Government policy makers should
4 recognize that in today's credit oriented society, high interest rates fuel inflation by adding
5 unreasonable costs at all levels of our economy.

6 We urge the passage of federal usury ceiling laws to stabilize a usury rate based on its ratio to
7 rate of inflation.

8 We oppose the use of any points on loans.

9 We call for an end to the use of public funds being loaned to non-family farm entities livestock,
10 corn and other grain production schemes, packing and processing plants that are noted for their
11 low wage scales, under the auspices of the USDA, REC, and SBA lending authorities.

12 We urge farm lending agencies to seek help from the federal government to assist in lowering
13 interest rates to make it comparable to farmer's net return on investment.

14 Farmers should have the first option of buying back their own foreclosed land at current land
15 prices, but they must hold the land for the next five years.

16 In the event a farm is foreclosed, the farmer should have first option to lease the farm up to a
17 three-year period, with the option to buy back the property.

18 Bankruptcy laws available to small business should be available to farmers.

19 We encourage tax laws that create opportunities for beginning and returning farmers, as opposed
20 to corporate or foreign entities.

21 We support adequate funding from the federal government to Farm Service Agency (FSA) to live
22 up to their traditional role as the lender of first opportunity for beginning farmers and the lender of
23 last resort for farmers.

24 Farmers Union should monitor the Farmer Mac Program to assure that it follows the intent of
25 Congress and helps family farmers, rather than transferring ownership of land to corporate
26 investors.

27 Because rural America, small towns, schools and churches are suffering as a result of the
28 depopulation taking place because of the growing concentration in agriculture, we support
29 programs which target loans and other types of assistance to beginning and small family farm
30 type operations.

31 We fully support appropriate oversight and investigations by congressional committees into all
32 farm lending practices including predatory lending practices.

33 **Farm Safety**

1 We recommend that farm equipment manufacturers be subject to rules requiring product safety,
2 and that manufacturers be liable for damages suffered due to injuries caused by faulty
3 equipment.

4 Tractor rollovers have been found to be a major source of farm related fatalities. Roll Over
5 Protection Devices should be required on farm tractors. Extensive education campaigns should
6 be conducted by agricultural extension services regarding this danger. In addition, the public
7 interest would be well served by a public-private partnership between the federal or state
8 government and equipment manufactures to provide financial incentive to farmers to install roll
9 over protection devices on existing tractors. We encourage farmer participation in safety
10 education programs in conjunction with this partnership.

11 **International Trade**

12 We encourage a realistic approach to world trade, recognizing that the United States controls the
13 world corn and grain market and sets world price trends. We believe international corn and grain
14 sales should be covered by an International Grains agreement with the intention of pricing world
15 corn and other grains at parity levels, to insure price and income stability to the producer.

16 We support a boycott of products produced by any company who, following the adoption of
17 NAFTA, moves an established factory outside the U.S. in order to capitalize on cheaper labor.

18 We recommend that a corn and grain marketing board be established by legislation. The board
19 should contain equal representation by farmers, and it should negotiate the export sales of all U.S.
20 corn and grain sold in the world trade. We recommend that corn/grain companies be required to
21 report the actual origin as well as destination of all corn/grain sales or purchases at the time of
22 sale or purchase. Additional international commodity agreements should be developed.

23 We call for an investigation into the influence of foreign countries and/or multinational corporations
24 on the Chicago Board of Trade.

25 Any interruption in agriculture commodity exports, unless in a time of national emergency, should
26 require that the loan rate be raised to 100% of parity.

27 In the event of any embargo of agriculture commodities, sales of all other products or materials
28 must also be embargoed.

29 We support the creation of a general agreement on production and prices.

30 We encourage all nations including the United States to move away from market distorting
31 mechanisms, such as the Export Enhancement Program, which continually lower world market
32 price.

33 We support legislation to stop the "circle of poison." Companies should not be allowed to sell or
34 export chemicals or products that have been banned in the United States.

35 We do not believe in "Free Trade," we believe in "Fair Trade."

1 **Labeling & Animal Identification**

2 We support mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) of all agricultural products. We support
3 efforts to identify and make known to consumers the origin of their food products. We believe that
4 all imported agricultural products should have their country of origin clearly labeled through all
5 stages to the consumer. If at any time the animal, fruit, vegetable, or other agricultural product, in
6 any stage of production, has been outside the United States, it should be labeled as originating
7 from the country from which it was imported. Country of origin labeling should be clearly
8 distinguished from domestic livestock identification.

9 In order to attempt to track animals in the event of a disease outbreak, the USDA has
10 implemented the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). This is a joint effort between state
11 government, federal government, and industry to integrate three components – premise
12 identification, animal identification, and animal tracking.

13 While the implementation of this program appears to be in the public’s interest in terms of food
14 safety, we have the following concerns about the implementation and usage of the system:

- 15 A. Those who should benefit from its implementation, i.e. packers, processors, and retailers,
16 should pay the cost of the system. Livestock producers or livestock auctions should not
17 shoulder the costs associated with the NAIS.
- 18 B. USDA should enforce animal ID at the first point of sale.

19 **Livestock Production Practices**

20 Agricultural producers and agricultural researchers, supported by private enterprise and producer
21 funded groups, basically strive to maintain a quality atmosphere and healthful environment for
22 livestock, confined and otherwise, therefore,

23 WE SUPPORT:

- 24 A. Federal funding for eradication of brucellosis, pseudo-rabies, and other livestock diseases
25 being maintained or increased, if needed.
- 26 B. Increase federal funding of sustainable livestock production research.
- 27 C. Investigation of animal treatment by large factory farms.
- 28 D. Open horse slaughtering plants as long as humane slaughtering practices are enforced.

29 **Local Food Systems**

30 We support the movement by farmers and ranchers to market their products to local communities
31 in a fair and equitable manner. We believe that local food systems increase awareness of the
32 value and importance of locally grown foods to consumers and create economic viability for
33 communities. We further believe that such production and marketing can provide increased
34 sustainable income to the farmer and rancher by increasing the share of the food dollar retained
35 by the farmer. In addition, less energy is wasted through transportation when local food systems
36 are created and used. Therefore,

37 WE SUPPORT:

- 38 A. The development of federal programs to support the creation and expansion of local and
39 regional food systems, including the creation and continuation of direct market programs.

- 1
2 B. Self-governance of farmers markets and local food systems.
3 C. Preference given to local food for government institutional food purchases at fair prices for
4 the farmers producing the food.
5 D. Continuation and funding of the Senior Farmers Market Program and the WIC (Women,
6 Infants and Children) Farmers Market Program.
7 F. Continuation and development of the “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” program
8 within the Department of Agriculture.
9 G. Financial assistance to small farm operators in the form of loans, grants, letters of credit,
10 equity financing and buy-downs to finance the expansion and improvement of farming
11 operations and the development of farmer-owned cooperative marketing and processing
12 ventures.
13 H. Assistance to small farm operators in marketing and processing specialty crops, livestock,
14 dairy and poultry.
15 I. Creating federal standards for meat processing that give small farm operators selling to
16 local and regional markets better access to retail-certified meat processing.

17 While we support maintaining public health standards, we oppose attempts to over-regulate
18 farmers markets and local food systems.

19 In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease in U.S. livestock populations, a blanket
20 approach by federal emergency response may unfairly harm small-scale producers and expose
21 those farms and their animals to increased risk when inspectors move from large facilities where
22 the disease is present to small facilities with no biohazard equipment on site. Federal
23 emergency plans for responding to infectious disease in U.S. livestock populations should
24 include special provisions for small farms that maintain a relatively small number of animals for
25 direct sale to consumers and that do not have access to the on-site biohazard equipment found
26 in large animal confinements.

27 **Marketing**

28 We object to animals being shipped across the border to be processed by cheaper labor, then
29 being brought back to our country at high prices.

30 Open market access is essential to an equitable livestock industry. Preferential pricing and
31 captive supplies encourage corporate control of the livestock industry. We oppose any weakening
32 of the Packers and Stockyards Act. We strongly encourage the Packers and Stockyards
33 Administration to aggressively pursue violations under the Packers and Stockyards Act pertaining
34 to the beef, pork, and poultry industry. We call on Congress to strengthen their position on
35 enforcement provisions with effective penalties for violations.

36 We oppose any effort by the United States Government to interfere with prices in the developing
37 countries that might work to the detriment of their farmers.

38 We oppose discounting the price by packers on the basis of number of hogs (volume) marketed.
39 We support mandatory reporting of all captive supplies.

40 We oppose the trading of unregulated options for agricultural commodities. We oppose vertical
41 integration of processors into agricultural activities. We oppose any monopolistic or
42 monopsonistic practices that create unfair buying or selling power and deny access to markets for
43 small to medium livestock producers.

1 We recommend that all bailment contracts for agricultural production be clearly labeled as
2 bailment contracts and that they clearly define farmer responsibilities.

3 We support the USDA and Department of Justice investigation into violations of anti-trust laws
4 and other unlawful manipulations of the food system by agribusiness' stranglehold on the
5 processing, marketing, and retail of agricultural products and because of ever increasing levels of
6 vertical integration in the food industry.

7 **Marketing Boards**

8 We recommend that Congress pass legislation setting up corn and other grains, and livestock
9 marketing boards to be composed of one member from each general farm organization.

10 The Iowa Farmers Union reaffirms its support for enabling legislation to establish a National
11 Agricultural Relations Board or separate board for single commodities or groups of closely related
12 commodities, with authority to bring farmers and farm cooperatives together with processors for
13 the purpose of bargaining over prices received by agricultural producers. Farmers need and are
14 entitled to a firm legal procedure, which will enable them to manage the production and marketing
15 of their products. Such legislation should preserve, unimpaired, the longstanding rights of farmers
16 to participate in bargaining associations and cooperatives without being subject to antitrust action.

17 We favor amendment of the Agricultural Fair Practices Act of 1967 to require buyers of agricultural
18 products to bargain in good faith with associations of producers.

19 We favor a contract grower's bill of rights to eliminate misleading and manipulative contract
20 provisions and to protect farmer investments.

21 **Meat & Grain Grading & Inspection**

22 Increasingly, customers of our grain production are requesting specific grades and standards to
23 better suit their end uses. In order for the United States to remain competitive in the global
24 market, we urge the USDA, through the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards
25 Administration (GIPSA), to review and revise current grain standards to better respond to the
26 market place. These may include, but not limited to, the following: Premium Non-GMO corn,
27 Premium Non-GMO soybeans, Ethanol Grade corn, Ethanol Grade wheat, Ethanol Grade
28 sorghum, and Bio-Diesel Grade soybeans. Through the use of these grades, producers may be
29 better able to market their production toward specific end-use channels, and thus obtain
30 premiums over existing commodity grades.

31 We feel a premium should be paid on high quality grain. A premium should be paid for low
32 moisture corn and other grain in the same ratio that it is docked when too wet. We favor ongoing
33 federally supervised corn, and other grain inspection at inland delivery points.

34 Corn and other grain grading practices should be revised and upgraded to more realistic
35 standards.

36 We support legislation to restore the integrity of the warehouse receipt for stored corn and other
37 grain. The Federal bankruptcy laws should be changed to give farmers the same status as
38 secured creditors in the disposition of the assets in a warehouse bankruptcy proceeding.

1 We support an investigation and revision of all meat grading practices. All imported meat should
2 not be marketed until it meets USDA standards and should be conspicuously labeled as to point
3 of origin and date processed. We support the certification of killing floor technicians in all packing
4 plants who measure percentage of lean meat.

5 We favor laws restricting the selling of foreign material and off grade corn and grain mixed with
6 the corn and grain to foreign markets. Any company exporting poor quality corn or other grain, or
7 excessive foreign material, should have their grain dealers license suspended and assessed
8 penalties.

9 We support Federal legislation to allow inter-state shipment of state inspected meat products
10 when the state inspection standards meet or exceed federal standards.

11 We urge that all shipments of imported food products be inspected for safety, health and
12 national security purposes.

13 *Mad Cow Disease.* We encourage beef packing plants and federal government agencies to
14 perform all necessary tests for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or “mad cow disease”) on
15 incoming cattle, and beef packing plants may be allowed to conduct additional tests if they
16 choose. We oppose reductions in the number of tests required by the USDA.

17 **Nutrition**

18 We urge Congress to restore adequate funding to programs such as school lunch, school milk,
19 food stamps and other supplemental programs providing improved nutrition for those who do
20 not have the income to buy it.

21 An adequate supply of food is an important part of the national food policy; as it is an important
22 part of a national farm policy. The ability of consumers to buy food determines the real demand for
23 farm products. We recommend that it is in the best interest of American farmers to continue these
24 programs under the administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, we oppose
25 any efforts to replace food stamps with actual payment in cash to program recipients.

26 Any company receiving federal or state funding, to relocate or enlarge be required to pay a wage
27 high enough to take employees off food stamps and other federally funded programs.

28 We support nutrition standards that incorporate considerations of social and economic justice and
29 environmental sustainability, with a clear emphasis on reducing public health concerns that are
30 rooted in our food system.

31 Nutrition standards such as those outlined in the recommendations of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines
32 Advisory Committee should not reject all meat, including sustainably-raised meat, as bad for the
33 environment just because CAFO production is unsustainable.

34 **Seed Industry**

35 Iowa farmers are paying historically high prices for seeds and are finding fewer choices of
36 varieties. Farmers need access to a variety of seeds at reasonable, competitive prices.
37 Concentration of market power in the seed industry is a major problem for rural Iowa.

38 WE SUPPORT:

- 1 A. Reasonable prices for a reasonable choice of seeds.
- 2 B. A diversified seed industry that encourages multiple independent seed companies serving
- 3 local communities.
- 4 C. Free market competition in the seed marketplace that promotes innovation, research, and
- 5 the development of new seed varieties.
- 6 D. A prohibition on seed company licensing agreements that ban a company from carrying
- 7 another competitor's traits because this discourages the development of seeds
- 8 possessing the best of all traits.
- 9 E. Asking the Iowa Attorney General to conduct a joint investigation and possible
- 10 enforcement action with other state Attorneys General regarding alleged violations of U.S.
- 11 anti-trust and trade practice laws in the seed industry.
- 12

1 **II. ENERGY, LAND USE, CONSERVATION & THE ENVIRONMENT**

2 **Chemicals & Additives**

3 WE SUPPORT:

- 4 A. Using the precautionary approach in the regulatory approval process for the marketing of
5 new chemicals or new uses of chemicals already on the market.
- 6 B. Publicly funded research on the long-term human, animal and ecological impacts of
7 exposure to chemicals used in agriculture.
- 8 C. Passage of the "Circle of Poison" legislation.
- 9 D. Requiring research institutions to submit environmental/economic/social impact
10 statements prior to marketing new technologies.
- 11 E. A container deposit law to apply to all farm chemicals.
- 12 F. Legislation that would develop incentives for farmers to reduce use of chemicals and work
13 toward a sustainable agriculture program.
- 14 G. Requiring that before marketing a new product, chemical companies first develop medical
15 procedures to remedy harmful effects to human health due to accidental misuse. Such
16 procedures should be stated in bold print on the label.
- 17 H. Prohibition of growth hormones in feed additives.
- 18 I. Adding buffer distance around sinkholes and watershed drainage-ways and minimum soil
19 depth criteria to the requirements for the NRCS evaluations done for the Department of
20 Natural Resources Manure Management Plans and for anhydrous ammonia application.

21 **Energy**

22 We feel the U.S. government should support energy development and conservation as a high
23 priority. We feel solving our energy problems is another line of defense. We believe the United
24 States should promote, expand, and ensure localized ownership to the fullest degree possible in
25 renewable/alternative energy development including wind, solar, bio-fuels, and other technologies.
26 Policies that can achieve this goal are – feed-in tariffs, incentives and mandates for locally owned
27 facilities, and tax credits for renewable energy production that can be used to offset active as well
28 as passive income earned by farmers and small businesses.

29 We favor an energy policy that protects our nation’s farmers’ interests in continuing to receive
30 adequate supplies of fuel for agricultural purposes.

31 The danger of leakage in nuclear plants while in operation and storage problems of nuclear waste
32 appear very much greater than first anticipated. Therefore, we call for a complete moratorium on
33 all new construction of nuclear power plants.

34 We encourage the development of renewable energy cooperatives in which producers own and
35 control the majority of the company.

36 We support mandated federal efficiency standards for energy use. We support maintaining
37 Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards at 50 miles per gallon, and we support
38 creating CAFE standards for SUV’s (Sports Utility Vehicles) and pickups. We support the further
39 development of efficiency standards for tractors, trucks, and other farm equipment. We support
40 the domestic production of more flex-fuel vehicles to encourage the use of domestic biofuel and
41 reduce the need for imported oil.

1 To combat monopolistic tendencies in the energy industry, we encourage an energy fuel structure,
2 allowing users to be the owners, each owner/user having one vote.

3 We urge funding of programs to research, develop and promote alternate energy sources and the
4 improvement of the infrastructure to support sustainably produced energy.

5 We support the development of alternate uses of farm commodities, such as ethanol and soy
6 biodiesel, with a focus on moving to next generation biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol and the
7 development of perennial cropping systems, which will improve the sustainability of feedstock
8 production. We oppose the negative campaign against the use of biodiesel and ethanol. We
9 urge a tariff on all importation of ethanol and ethyl alcohol into this country.

10 We support the domestic production of more flex-fuel vehicles to encourage the use of domestic
11 ethanol and reduce the need for imported oil.

12 We support current EPA rules for oxygenated fuel requirements and urge the use of ethanol to
13 meet these requirements.

14 We support the concept of farmers producing electricity through sustainable practices, such as
15 wind or biomass conversion, and selling excess energy to electric companies and rural electric
16 cooperatives at the utility company's energy purchase price from their other providers. We support
17 net metering of electricity usage at the farm. We support immediate research into replacement of
18 the current electric energy distribution grid with a distributed generation system.

19 We support the establishment of a renewable fuel standard (RFS) that requires a minimum of 20
20 percent of our nation's fuel supply to be derived from renewable commodities. In addition, we
21 support creating a Renewable Fuels Energy Reserve equal to one year's use of ethanol and soy
22 biodiesel. The reserve shall be stored in farmer-owned facilities in commodities used to make
23 renewable fuels. Producers will be compensated for storage and eligible for commodity loans.

24 We support full funding of renewable energy programs in the Farm Bill and urge Congress to
25 consider reclassifying the appropriations for those programs as mandatory spending.

26 We support a renewable electricity standard (RES) of 25% by 2020. Any federal RES should
27 apply to rural and electric distribution cooperatives.

28 We support an energy efficiency resources standard (EERS) of 15% of retail sales by 2020. Any
29 federal EERS should apply to rural electric distribution cooperatives.

30 **Genetically Modified Organisms & Biotechnology**

31 We support the adoption of a precautionary principle in the regulatory approval process for the
32 marketing of new genetically modified seeds.

33 We support publicly funded research into the long-term human, animal and ecological impacts of
34 genetically modified traits deployed in agricultural production.

35 We oppose the patenting of life forms. We further oppose patent holders charging farmers
36 exorbitant technical fees and royalties for access to genetically modified seeds and patented farm
37 animals.

1 We oppose further use of tax dollars in developing terminator technology that would insure that
2 seed will not reproduce. We oppose the development and selling of seed that is sterile.

3 We advocate legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be held
4 strictly liable for safety, human health or environmental problems, including cross-pollination or
5 contamination of neighboring crops related to the use of GMOs, as long as generally accepted
6 crop production practices are followed.

7 If genetically modified organisms are accidentally displaced (through drift, etc.) onto land owned
8 or rented by a farmer, the farmer should not be required to return the crops, or revenue from the
9 crops, which result from the displacement.

10 Damages caused to farmers through lower prices, lost markets, or contamination, shall be fully
11 reimbursed to farmers by the company producing the genetically modified product. We advocate
12 that all data used in the analysis of the health and environmental effects of GMOs be available to
13 the public.

14 Government regulatory agencies shall not license genetically modified products that are not
15 acceptable for both human consumption and animal feed. Government regulatory agencies and
16 input suppliers shall ensure that farmers are informed of all potential market risks and segregation
17 requirements associated with planting any licensed genetically modified crop.

18 All GMO seed shall be clearly labeled with the following information: 1) markets (foreign or
19 domestic) where the product is not accepted; and 2) all planting and handling restrictions. A
20 paper verification system should be put in place to insure input supplies are informing farmers
21 regarding GMO risks and responsibilities.

22 WE OPPOSE:

- 23 A. Any patent rights of genetics in farm animals.
- 24 B. The use of bovine somatotropin (BST) or the import of dairy products produced with BST
25 and recommend labeling of all products containing BST.

26 We support a uniform federal standard that requires the clear labeling of agricultural products
27 containing genetically modified material or ingredients.

28 **Global Climate Change**

29 We recognize that global climate change represents a threat to our national security and to the
30 security, safety and reliability of our food supply. We support the adoption of a national climate
31 strategy that recognizes the threat of climate change and the leading role of farmers, as the
32 managers of our common resources, in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change. Our
33 national climate strategy should:

- 34 A. Establish a national mandatory price on greenhouse gas emissions, along with a
35 trading system for emission permits that would allow farmers to generate income from
36 on-farm practices that reduce emissions;
- 37 B. Assist farmers in reducing their reliance on the fossil fuels that are the primary
38 contributor to global climate change and transitioning to more sustainable energy
39 sources for on-farm electricity and fuel;

- 1 C. Focus on incentivizing agricultural practices that increase the resilience of our food
- 2 system by promoting biodiversity in agricultural production;
- 3 D. Promote on-farm production of renewable energy sources such as biofuel, wind and
- 4 solar power that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing income for
- 5 farmers;
- 6 E. Provide incentives to farmers to adopt the best proven conservation practices to
- 7 sequester carbon and reduce on-farm carbon emissions; and
- 8 F. Create a framework for pursuing an international climate treaty that will facilitate the
- 9 adoption of these principles and practices on a global scale.

10 **Rural Utility Cooperatives**

11 We affirm our historic support of the right of the electric power consumers to provide electric
12 service for themselves through rural electric cooperatives (RECs), in which they share ownership
13 and control. To provide service in "hard to serve" areas at a reasonable cost to consumers, we
14 reemphasize our consistent support of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan program providing
15 long term, low interest financing for electric, telephone, and water facilities in rural areas.

16 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 17 A. RECs purchasing renewable energy from local members and small businesses at a fair
- 18 market price.
- 19 B. Requiring RECs to allow farmers to offset all their electric usage, even among multiple
- 20 meters, by production of on-farm renewable energy.
- 21 C. Modifying RUS rules to allow a portion of the electric generation assets of RECs to come
- 22 from distributed generation resources and to allow distributed generation assets to
- 23 interconnect without requiring RECs to first modify existing RUS agreements.

24 **WE OPPOSE:**

- 25 A. Any attempts to phase out the REC system.
- 26 B. RECs furnishing electricity to large corporate farms at a discounted rate below average
- 27 cost to family farm member of the same co-op. Discounts, low-interest loans, and other
- 28 financial benefits should be disclosed to all co-op members.
- 29 C. RECs co-signing a loan for any other entity.
- 30 D. Large-scale deregulation of the electricity delivery system of our nation; however, we
- 31 recognize that certain regulations may need to be amended or removed in order to
- 32 encourage farmer and locally owned energy and distributed energy generation (for
- 33 example, through policies such as aggregation of meters, fair pricing for electric sales,
- 34 etc.)

35 We feel rural water delivery systems are a viable alternative for rural residents when
36 contamination of rural wells and ponds appears to be a real possibility. Rural water systems
37 should not be viewed as an alternative to good environmental policy. Rural water systems should
38 not be used as a tool to encourage urban sprawl. Instead, rural water systems should be utilized
39 only to enhance rural life by providing a safe and affordable water supply.

40 Rural water utilities should be required to exercise sound business and financial practices to
41 ensure reliable water at reasonable and stable rates to customers in rural Iowa. We oppose
42 furnishing water to large corporate entities at a discounted rate below average cost to family farm
43 customers. Discounts, low-interest loans, and other financial benefits should be publicly disclosed

1 **Soil & Water Conservation**

2 We reaffirm our belief that farm program eligibility should be tied to resource stewardship.

3 We support full and adequate funding for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the
4 Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) to allow for adequate rental prices and to encourage
5 landowner participation in the programs. The approval of CRP and WRP funding should be based
6 on targeting practices that maximize the conservation benefits achieved and that encourage the
7 development of diverse native species. The programs should incorporate monitoring and
8 evaluation requirements to measure improvement as a result of practices adopted and determine
9 which practices have the best cost-to-benefit ratio.

10 We believe that the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) should not subsidize large
11 concentrated animal feeding operations.

12 We favor environmentally appropriate development and maintenance of our river systems in as
13 natural a state as possible for the purposes of flood control and electric power generation.

14 We favor the continuation of improvement to our present parks and recreational facilities.

15 Land not suited to agriculture should be maintained for wildlife habitat, recreation, conservation or
16 environmental uses.

17 Soil conservation practices that have been financed by government cost sharing funds should be
18 required to be recorded in the abstract and to be continued or upgraded by existing and
19 subsequent landowners. We urge the USDA to allow existing waterways and filter strips in place
20 to enter into the continuous CRP program as newly constructed areas. Strict conservation plans
21 should be enacted and enforced for land coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program
22 (CRP). Land in CRP should stay in the CRP even if the land ownership changes.

23 Appropriate buffer strips should become mandatory along rivers and large streams.

24 We support funding for increased cost share to install controls and features that will allow farms to
25 transition away from the practice of watering livestock in open surface waterways.

26 To promote good maintenance of conservation practices, as well as, use and construction of new
27 practices; credit should be given by adding bushels per acre above the assigned bushel base.
28 These bushels then could be subtracted if improvements were destroyed. The bushels assigned
29 could vary according to the quality and completeness of the practices.

30 We urge more research to determine the long-term effects of chemicals and fertilizers on the total
31 environment, and encourage proper disposal of chemical wastes, not to exceed thirty days
32 storage of toxic waste.

33 We urge that all waste from livestock confinement operations and sewage disposal be spread
34 back on the land and incorporated into the topsoil only when it does not create a soil erosion
35 problem. Application of liquid manure should be followed by tillage where possible.

36 We urge clarification of water and air pollution laws, and favor more farmer representation on EPA
37 Advisory Committees.

1 We oppose the sale of water by states to private interests without the consent of all states in a
2 particular river basin.

3 We favor grazing fees on public lands be set to be comparable with surrounding privately held
4 lands.

5 We support the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and urge Congress to fully fund the
6 program and implement it according to the original intent of the program, allowing all farmers to
7 become eligible.

1 **III. RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMY**

2 **Communications**

3 We support continued funding for public radio and public television to ensure rural areas have
4 access to reliable information from the media.

5 We support the expansion of broadband internet access to rural areas.

6 **Cooperatives**

7 We remain wholly dedicated to the strengthening of the family farm system and farmer
8 cooperatives and resolutely opposed to an industrialized type of corporate farming or to
9 domination of farm ownership and operation by off-farm or alien interest. The essence of the
10 cooperative movement--farmers working together for their mutual benefit--is the spirit which
11 motivates every Farmers Union activity.

12 Because we view attempts to restrict farmer owned and controlled cooperatives as an assault on
13 farmers themselves,

14 WE OPPOSE:

- 15 A. Attempts to repeal the Capper-Volstead Act.
- 16 B. Attempts to increase the interest rates charged to the Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).
- 17 C. The practice of co-ops, both local and regional, from producing agricultural commodities
18 and custom farming when in competition with their members, and using producers' equity
19 for these purposes.
- 20 D. The sale of farmer owned cooperatives to private industries that would increase the
21 concentration of the market in which the cooperative operated.
- 22 E. Providing large retirement and severance packages, or "Golden Parachutes", to
23 executives of cooperatives who fail to represent the interests of the farmer-owners through
24 mismanagement when bankruptcy forces the cooperative to close.

25 WE SUPPORT:

- 26 A. Protection from unfair taxes and regulations that destroy the benefits derived therefrom.
- 27 B. Market Promotions Programs and Export Enhancement programs only for farmer owned
28 export cooperatives.
- 29 C. A co-op bill of rights to aid members in regaining active independent producer control of
30 management salaries and co-op activities that may not be in the interest of its members or
31 family farm agriculture.
- 32 D. We support a co-op structure that requires payout of retained equity when a member
33 becomes inactive in any particular production area.
- 34 E. Measures restricting voting stock and ownership to farmer members of the co-op.
- 35 F. Measures restricting non-farmer investor control of farmer cooperatives.
- 36 G. Measures restricting the board membership of farm cooperatives to farmers only.

37 **Defense Spending**

38 Because of the increased spending on defense, competition for discretionary funding for Farm Bill
39 programs, and fraud and waste in the military industrial complex,

1 WE SUPPORT:

- 2 A. Closer scrutiny of government spending on the military.
- 3 B. Military spending subject to the same accountability and cuts as any other recipient of
- 4 government funds.
- 5 C. Giving military personnel a living wage.
- 6 D. Keeping current equipment operable.
- 7 E. Clamping down on overpriced and shoddy equipment provided by contractors.
- 8 F. Gathering increased international support in any war.
- 9 G. Less reliance on National Guard call-up duty for foreign conflicts.
- 10 H. Increased accountability for military contractors and their employees.
- 11 I. The elimination of non-competitive bidding for military contracts
- 12 J. Full funding for the comprehensive medical care for mental and physical needs of US
- 13 Veterans.

14 **Education**

15 We urge continued educational support such that all states and areas of our nation can provide
16 equal educational opportunities for all their children. The state should be free to apply federal
17 aid funds to best serve the educational needs of the state. We see no threat in federal aid to
18 continued historic control of education by the state and its political subdivisions. The federal
19 government should provide increased funds for student loans, grants, and other assistance
20 programs. Because of its unfair impact on Iowa schools and because of inadequate funding to
21 cover increased costs, we urge Congress to repeal the “No Child Left Behind” law.

22 **Employment for Disabled Americans**

23 Farmers Union supports public and private programs aimed at finding, testing for aptitudes, and
24 rehabilitating Americans, and supports the President's Committee on Employment of People with
25 Disabilities.

26 **Experience Works (Green Thumb Program)**

27 Experience Works, formerly Green Thumb, provides part time employment to older, low-income
28 men and women to provide conservation, community service, housing, rehabilitation and
29 winterization, and outreach services to our rural communities. We urge the program be extended
30 to assist all rural elderly people who are in need of additional income.

31 **Farm-Labor Coalition**

32 We urge increased cooperation between farmers, workers, small businessmen and consumers for
33 the mutual benefit of all. We support labor and their struggle for fair pay for their labor and decent
34 working conditions.

35 We oppose efforts to weaken overtime pay standards.

36 We call for the prohibition of federal government contracts with companies hiring permanent
37 replacement workers during labor disputes.

38 We support strengthening worker protection standards regarding wage rates, health, safety and
39 housing conditions for migrant seasonal, minority and other farm laborers. We support the right of

1 workers to bargain collectively for fair wages. We believe fair worker standards should include a
2 livable minimum wage.

3 We encourage all of our members to celebrate the accomplishments of the labor movement on
4 the Labor Day Holiday.

5 **Health Care**

6 We believe that access to high quality and affordable health care is a basic human right. We call
7 on the federal government to initiate a 'single-payer' national health insurance program. We
8 believe that such a program would save billions of dollars, control costs and provide health care to
9 all Americans.

10 We believe Medicare should offer a simple and comprehensive drug benefit administered through
11 the traditional Medicare program and not through private industry. The US government should
12 utilize its bargaining power to purchase medication from drug manufacturing companies at
13 discounted prices.

14 We believe the health care provider and the patient should determine the length of a patient's
15 hospital stay. Health insurance companies or health maintenance organizations should not make
16 this decision.

17 Medicare reimbursement to health care providers in Iowa should fully cover medical costs and
18 should not be significantly less than reimbursements in other states.

19 **Insurance**

20 Insurance companies should be required to notify policyholders regarding liability for accidents
21 to farm employees. Workers compensation requirements should be clearly defined in liability
22 insurance policies.

23 Insurance companies should be required to cover family members and temporary employees or
24 day laborers.

25 **OSHA**

26 We favor farmer representation on OSHA Advisory Committees.

27 We recommend that family farmers employing a limited number of farm workers continue to be
28 exempt from OSHA regulations.

29 **Political Reform**

30 Because we believe that limiting the number of terms that a person could serve in Congress
31 would eliminate both good and bad legislators; we feel curtailing special interest campaign
32 contributions and establishing a system of public financing would be a more effective way of
33 reforming Congress. We urge support of a cap on money, which may be donated during an
34 election cycle by individuals and corporations to political parties. We urge the elimination of "soft
35 money" contributions and the overturning of the *Citizens United* ruling by the Supreme Court.

1 We oppose the use of secret “earmarks” in the congressional appropriations process which direct
2 the use of federal funds toward specific projects without the usual scrutiny of the legislative
3 process and without administrative scrutiny to determine the relative worthiness of the project

4 We urge a limitation on the amount of money spent for elections by candidates for public office.
5 We support partial public financing of all Senatorial and Congressional elections. We call for the
6 elimination of all honorariums paid to elected officials. We support a ban of all out of state money
7 in the gubernatorial campaign.

8 We strongly oppose decisions made by the US Supreme Court that create new political rights
9 for corporate interests rather than protecting the rights of individuals to control our system of
10 government. Such judicial activism in support of corporate corruption of the political system
11 lessens the representation of ordinary people in the political process.

12 **Postal Regulations**

13 We oppose any curtailment of Saturday mail delivery or other services to rural areas. We are
14 opposed to the elimination of overnight delivery to rural areas. We are opposed to the
15 privatization of the U.S. Postal System.

16 **Public Relations**

17 We urge the National Farmers Union to continuously make presentations before consumer
18 groups, men's and women's business groups, colleges and schools, and other wide audiences to
19 explain and to educate our citizens about the need for a national food policy.

20 We urge the NFU to develop an extensive consumer relations program to tell the positive aspects
21 of agriculture, the cost of production, and the true story of the function of farm programs. We will
22 cooperate with other interest groups to tell this story nationwide.

23 **Social Policies**

24 The Farmers Union supports Federal and State funding for retraining for our many displaced
25 farmers, at a wage that enables them to maintain a decent standard of living for their families.

26 We believe that the emphasis on rural economic development must be built around agriculture
27 rather than away from it.

28 Farmers Union supports the concept of small towns and communities banding together, in the
29 interest of promoting economic development in their areas.

30 **Social Security**

31 The Social Security fund should not be raided or shifted into the general budget or defense
32 budget. We recommend that the minimum monthly Social Security benefits be raised in
33 accordance with the cost-of-living rates, and that other pensions not be affected by any change in
34 Social Security benefits. We recommend that all cost-of-living increases should be based on a flat
35 dollar amount rather than a percentage. We oppose IRS interpretation of the ten (10) year CRP
36 payment as earned income.

1 We believe that if a farm owner of CRP land provides no material participation or care of the land,
2 he should report the income as rental income.

3 We believe that the amount of income subject to the Social Security tax and Medicare tax should
4 not be capped and that additional revenue should be used to secure the long-term viability of the
5 Social Security and Medicare systems.

6 **Taxation**

7 We believe that all taxes ought to be progressive and reflect a person's ability to pay. We believe
8 that, when properly structured, the income tax is inherently fairer than other types of taxes. We
9 support a graduated income tax and the continuation of deductions for home mortgages and
10 dependents.

11 The legislation that creates the KEOGH Plan should be revised to better reflect the needs of
12 family farmers. We recommend that cooperatives be allowed to have the KEOGH Plan for
13 member investors, thereby leaving dividends tax-free until retirement.

14 Farmers Union calls upon Congress to realistically study the tax structure in this nation. Realizing
15 that with the present taxing structure, the effects of graduated taxing are effectively diminished by
16 the current application of the deduction system, we call for legislation to more fairly tax income
17 above normal levels. A thorough study should be done of the flat rate tax concept before any
18 action is taken to pass it into law.

19 Realizing that concentration of land and livestock production in fewer and larger hands are two of
20 the biggest concerns in agriculture, we call for elimination of the tax incentive to those outside
21 agriculture, to invest in farmland and related areas of production.

22 Realizing that entry into agriculture has become almost impossible without inheritance, and
23 difficult even then, we call for an end to tax policies that were formulated to compensate for
24 income loss from low prices, but in effect, do this only for high equity, high income producers,
25 often to the disadvantage of low equity and beginning producers.

26 We urge elimination of "tax havens" through international treaties and preferential capital gain
27 treatment for foreign investors. The practice of allowing subtraction of farm losses should be
28 limited to people with less than \$25,000.00 nonfarm gross income.

29 We strongly oppose any reduction in capital gains taxation, but support adjusting the taxable gain
30 by the amount of accumulated inflation. We believe that capital gains should be taxed at the
31 same rate as earned income.

32 We favor income averaging for self-employed people.

33 We favor an investment tax credit targeted to the seller of farmland and used machinery who sells
34 to a beginning farmer. This should include a one time only sale from parent to offspring that could
35 be also be applied to small business owners.

36 We oppose the elimination of the step-up basis given heirs on assets they inherit.

37 We urge congress to modify the estate tax by gradually raising exemption levels, but we oppose
38 the elimination of the estate tax.

1 We urge Congress to limit the use of “1031 Rollovers” to property used for similar purposes.

2 **Transportation**

3 Good transportation is essential to a sound agricultural system. We favor an integrated
4 transportation system of waterways, railways and roads. The monopolistic nature of transportation
5 systems has created many problems. We urge the improvement of the national transportation
6 system to facilitate the moving of agricultural products to and from market, and to improve the
7 mobility of rural America.

8 We call upon the State Department of Transportation and related Federal agencies to conduct a
9 study on the feasibility of public ownership of railroad right-of-ways as an alternative to the existing
10 system.

11 We support a federally owned and operated interstate railway system to increase the fuel
12 efficiency and availability of transportation services

13 We reaffirm our commitment to barge traffic on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. We favor
14 modernization of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers to the extent that it will benefit family farmers.
15 However, we feel that modernization should be environmentally friendly and cost effective.

16 Great potential exists for a better grain market on the West Coast of the United States. This
17 potential is not being utilized by Midwestern producers because of inadequate rail service and
18 inadequate export facilities. Now, therefore, Iowa Farmers Union urges a joint effort by other state
19 Farmers Union executives in working out a desirable solution to this problem. We oppose
20 proposals to increase the total amount of weight per rail car because of its negative impact on
21 short lines essential to the transportation of products produced by family farmers.

22 We support legislation that provides economic assistance to railroads before abandonment
23 petitions are filed.

24 We oppose collection of highway use taxes on agricultural fuels and other non-highway fuels.

25 Trucking industries weight and length standards should be regulated and standardized on a
26 national level.

27 States should be notified far enough in advance so they can take the necessary precautions to
28 protect their citizens when hazardous waste is being transported across the state.

29 A program should be developed to upgrade rural road bridges to handle legal weights.

30 Taxpayer dollars should not be used to allow for easier, cheaper transportation of foreign-made
31 goods in a way that jeopardizes American jobs, national security, Iowa's farmland and
32 environment. The state government of Iowa should cease its active participation in promoting this
33 project.

1 **STATE ISSUES**

2 **I. AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITION**

3 **Agriculture**

4 The Iowa Farmers Union supports an agricultural system based on families. We consider family
5 farms to be a farming situation where direct family members provide the majority of the labor and
6 management and live on the farm or in the county or contiguous county.

7 We support a family farm system of agriculture because of its redeeming social values, including
8 its effect on rural communities, families and our environment.

9 Vertical integration of the agricultural industry by the processing, distributing and retailing
10 industries and conglomerate businesses has created unfair, monopolistic and monopsonistic
11 practices that concentrate buying and selling power and make it exceedingly difficult for family
12 farmers to remain competitive. This contributes to the decline of rural populations and the
13 consequent crowding of metropolitan centers. It has resulted in a noticeable decline in competition
14 in some phases of agricultural production and threatens others.

15 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 16 A. A prohibition of the feeding of livestock by packers and multinational grain corporations.
- 17 B. The family farm tax credit, including provisions for family farm corporations.
- 18 C. Legislation to prohibit the purchase of farmland by investment syndicates.
- 19 D. Listing all additives on the labels of milk and dairy products.
- 20 E. Restoring the authority of counties to site industrial livestock operations.
- 21 F. The promotion of the growing organic agriculture sector in Iowa and providing organic
22 growers with the support necessary to make Iowa a leader in organic production.
- 23 G. The removal of barriers to the legal production of industrial hemp. IDALS and local law
24 enforcement should work with the federal government to help farmers to comply with
25 federal law and allow them to grow this valuable oil and fiber crop.
- 26 H. Enacting a graduated land tax, as an effective way to preserve family farm agriculture.
- 27 I. Defining corporate animal confinement buildings as industrial facilities rather than
28 agricultural facilities, taxing them at industrial rates.
- 29 J. Directing the IDNR to more closely monitor industrial animal facilities and providing the
30 resources to carry out that monitoring.
- 31 K. A ban on any new open lagoons and a phasing out of existing ones.
- 32 L. Strong laws that protect diversified farmers from negligent spray drift.

33 **WE OPPOSE**

- 34 A. Use of cash accounting for farms of a type who gross over one (1) million dollars a year.
- 35 B. Any contracting arrangement by packers that results in unfair competition to family
36 livestock producers.
- 37 C. Any state regulatory reform that reduces the ability of citizens to litigate or collect
38 damages from dangerous or harmful corporate behavior or actions.
- 39 D. The so-called "Ag-Gag" bill, which unfairly targets whistle-blowers in industrial agriculture
40 facilities.
- 41 E. Including family farm leasing corporations in the definition of "family farm corporations"
42 under Chapter 9H of the Iowa Code.

1 **Beginning Farmer Incentives**

2 The high capital requirements to begin farming are working hardships on those who are
3 attempting to get started. We favor special incentives to assist young and beginning farmers, in
4 order to insure that American agriculture continues to be in the hands of family farmers.
5 Therefore,

6 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 7 A. Creating set asides specifically for beginning farmers in existing government programs.
- 8 B. Tax incentives for selling or renting farmland to a beginning farmer.
- 9 C. Funding for business training programs for beginning farmers, including special outreach
10 to women and minority populations.
- 11 D. A state program to offer student loan repayment assistance for beginning farmers.
- 12 E. Making land acquired by a lending institution through foreclosure or deed back available
13 for rent or purchase to a beginning farmer, once the original owner has proven unable to
14 retrieve the property.
- 15 F. Giving priority for Beginning Farmer Loan Program funds to beginning farmers who do
16 not already own or rent farmland, machinery, equipment, breeding livestock, or farm
17 improvements; allowing for contract sales between spouses, parents, grandparents, or
18 siblings; and creating new programs specifically for beginning farmers who do not have
19 a spouse, parent, grandparent, or sibling already engaged in farming.

20 **Checkoff Programs**

21 Commodity checkoff programs must be accountable to the needs of family farmers. All
22 commodity checkoffs should be voluntary at the point of sale. Mandatory referendums should
23 be conducted every 4 years. Checkoff funds should only be used toward marketing and
24 research that benefits family-sized producers. Checkoff funds should in no way be used for
25 lobbying and political activities or comingled with funds used for lobbying or political activity.

26 **Contract Farming**

27 While we may not like the concept of contract farming, we believe that farmers that subcontract
28 to large agribusinesses need some basic protections. A model contract should be available for
29 anyone considering entering contract feeding. The Attorney General's office should draft it and
30 have it on file for requests. Information should be included about compensation including:

- 31 1. whether the contract insures fair return for capital investment;
- 32 2. whether the contract contains fair return for labor and services; and
- 33 3. whether the contract allows the grower to have some control over the factors that determine
34 the level of payment to the grower, e.g., feed efficiency, feed ration, good feed conversion,
35 quality of feeder stock and feed, etc.

36 The model contract should include at a minimum, a statement of potential liability for each party
37 to the contract, procedures and remedies available if the contract is terminated and should state
38 the availability of mediation.

1 Contracts should not be allowed to contain confidentiality clauses. Contract integrators should
2 be held liable for environmental damage caused by their livestock or crops. Contract integrators
3 should be required to act in good faith. Contract growers should be allowed to obtain all
4 information related to compensation, including grading of product and ranking with other
5 growers. Tournament compensation (based on ranking among growers) should be eliminated.
6 Contract growers should be allowed to receive legal costs in legal settlements. Contracts
7 should not be allowed to require arbitration to settle disputes. Contract growers should have a
8 process to fix problems before a contract can be terminated. Contract growers should be
9 compensated for damages when contracts are terminated. Contract growers should be allowed
10 to organize together without retribution. Contract integrators should be required to negotiate
11 with groups of producers in good faith.

12 **Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship**

13 The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is responsible for a broad
14 range of programs impacting agriculture, consumer protection and the use of Iowa's natural
15 resources. Among the programs and initiatives carried out as part of the mission of IDALS,

16 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 17 A. Required brand inspections at all livestock centers and a requirement for the consignment
18 sheet or bill of sale to contain the license number, color and type of vehicle transporting
19 the livestock and the identification of the driver.
- 20 B. Adequate state funding for the eradication of brucellosis, pseudo-rabies and other
21 livestock diseases, as well as the regulation of the transportation of livestock from large
22 feedlots and livestock facilities to prevent transmission of disease.
- 23 C. Making funding available through IDALS to landowners to eradicate multi-flora rose.
- 24 D. Requiring the posting of adequate warning signs at all storage structures that have the
25 potential to produce lethal gases.
- 26 E. Stricter enforcement of the laws regarding cleanliness of all food handlers.
- 27 F. Programs to pay farmers for delivering premium quality grain.
- 28 G. Legislation that targets the liability of genetically modified products back to the originator of
29 that product, not the producer.
- 30 H. IDALS having the authority to monitor the health of livestock entering the state and to
31 destroy, quarantine or return infected livestock.
- 32 I. The continuation of the Iowa Grain Indemnity Fund Program as it is currently administered.
- 33 J. Establishing and funding an Organic Center within IDALS to support the needs of organic
34 agriculture.

35 **Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture**

36 The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture serves a valuable service to family farmers and to
37 Iowa. Through the funding of the research and development of practices that encourage
38 sustainable farming, the Leopold Center is a model for similar efforts throughout the United
39 States. We support a funding mechanism for the Leopold Center that involves a tax on the value
40 of all fertilizer and pesticides. We also encourage the legislature to fully fund the center to
41 support the goals of sustainable farming.

1 **Livestock Production Practices**

2 We support good animal husbandry in livestock production practices. We call for severe penalties
3 for all parties involved in the mistreatment of farm animals.

4 **Local Food Systems**

5 We support the movement by farmers and ranchers to market the production of their land to local
6 communities in a fair and equitable manner. We believe that local food systems increases
7 awareness of the value and importance of locally grown foods to consumers. We further believe
8 that such production and marketing can provide increased income to the farmer and rancher by
9 increasing the share of the food dollar retained by the farmer. Therefore,

10 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 11 A. The creation and continuation of farmers markets and community supported agriculture
12 programs, both public and private.
- 13 B. Development of state and local programs to support the development of local and regional
14 food systems.
- 15 C. Self-governance of farmers markets and local food systems.
- 16 D. Programs and incentives to encourage the creation of cooperatively owned local food
17 hubs to transport, process and aggregate locally produced agricultural products for use in
18 local and regional markets.
- 19 E. Development of sustainable agriculture production within cities and towns.
- 20 F. Business tax abatements and incentives for small, state-inspected meat processing plants,
21 including mobile slaughtering.
- 22 G. Incentives for businesses and institutions to procure food from local vendors, including a
23 mandated preference for locally produced food in purchases by state government and
24 public educational institutions, and a tax credit for small farm operations that market to
25 schools.
- 26 H. Expanded funding for the Local Food & Farm Program, with expanded oversight by an
27 advisory board, of which at least fifty (50) percent of members must be operators of direct
28 market farms.
- 29 I. Making Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS) Certification more affordable and less of a
30 regulatory burden for small and mid-size farms.
- 31 J. Funding for pilot programs to increase institutional access to locally produced food,
32 including farm-to-school programs and programs bringing local produce to health care
33 facilities.
- 34 K. Funding for pilot programs to increase access to and improve affordability of locally
35 produced food for low income and underserved communities.
- 36 L. Funding for education and business training programs for direct market farms.
- 37 M. Funding for programs that assist small farm operators with the marketing and processing
38 of specialty crops, livestock, dairy and poultry.
- 39 N. The development and publishing of materials by the Iowa cooperative extension service
40 that document the best methods, practices, and strategies for small farm operators
41 producing and marketing specialty crops, livestock, dairy and poultry.
- 42 O. Financial assistance to small farm operators in the form of loans, grants, letters of credit,
43 equity financing and buy-downs to finance the expansion and improvement of farming
44 operations and the development of farmer-owned cooperative marketing and processing
45 ventures.

1 P. A property tax exemption for small farm operations producing specialty crops, livestock,
2 dairy or poultry.

3 WE OPPOSE:

4 A. Attempts to over-regulate farmers markets and local food systems, while maintaining
5 public health and environmental standards.

6 B. Attempts to over-regulate the processing of locally produced fresh milk.

7 **Research and Agriculture**

8 We support increased public investment in agricultural education and research via our land
9 grant institutions and university extension service that is driven by input from farmers and that
10 promotes the best interest of family farms and an economically and ecologically diverse and
11 sustainable system of food production, particularly in the context of global climate change and
12 the resilience of our agricultural ecosystem.

1 **II. ENERGY, LAND USE, CONSERVATION & THE ENVIRONMENT**

2 **Agricultural Chemicals**

3 Drift from the spray application of agricultural chemicals is a pervasive problem impacting
4 farmers, particularly those involved in fruit, vegetable, honey and organic production. Therefore,

5 WE SUPPORT:

- 6 A. Stricter penalties for reckless or negligent damage to crops from spray drift, including
7 failure to follow label requirements.
- 8 B. A requirement that parties responsible for reckless or negligent spray drift pay the crop
9 owner for both actual and punitive damages.
- 10 C. Penalties for companies employing contract applicators who are responsible for reckless
11 or negligent spray drift, particularly where a single company has been responsible for
12 numerous instances of drift by its contractors.
- 13 D. Requiring aerial spray applicators to request permission to fly below 300 feet in the
14 vicinity of a resident’s home, fields and livestock facilities.
- 15 E. Requiring spray applicators to check the apiary and sensitive crop registries prior to
16 application and to give adequate advance notice to those on the registries; sensitive
17 crop and apiary sites should be indicated on maps provided to aerial applicators.
- 18 F. Requiring commercial spray applicators to report their pesticide applications to IDALS on
19 a biannual basis and making that usage reporting available in a searchable online public
20 database.
- 21 G. Making incident reports of spray drift, including the results and resolutions of any
22 investigations performed, available on a publicly accessible, searchable online database.
- 23 H. Requiring that applicator insurance information be updated to include evidence of
24 financial responsibility as a condition for licensure and certification, and making this
25 information publicly available through IDALS.
- 26 I. Increasing the required minimum liability insurance coverage for pesticide applicators to
27 \$1 million annually and up to \$300,000 per incident.
- 28 J. Requiring that pesticide applicator certification and continuing education courses include
29 information on the financial impact that spray drift can have on sensitive crops, non-
30 GMO crops and bee apiaries.
- 31 K. Increasing the maximum pesticide label violation fine to \$5,000 per violation and
32 increasing the penalty for second and subsequent offenses on a graduated scale.
- 33 L. Providing for a formal procedure through IDALS to investigate reported incidents of
34 spray drift and requiring that IDALS provide information on its website and in writing to
35 individuals impacted by spray drift regarding their legal rights and available remedies.
- 36 M. The creation by IDALS of easily, publicly accessible information related to the reporting
37 protocol for spray drift incidents, an on-line reporting tool, a clarified statement of the role
38 of the IDALS Pesticide Bureau in assisting with drift compensation, and information on
39 risks from pesticide exposure.
- 40 N. Making resources available for the state to turn around the results of spray drift testing
41 within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the sample, and providing assistance to
42 landowners to access private lab testing if IDALS is unable to return test results to the
43 reporting party within twenty-one (21) days.
- 44 O. The creation of a spray drift indemnity fund to improve the availability and efficiency of
45 spray drift testing.

1 **Eminent Domain**

2 The Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution assures that "private property shall not be
3 taken for public use, without just compensation."

4 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 5 A. A transparent and understandable process for the consideration of a proposed pipeline
6 or transmission project that provides for meaningful input by landowners and members
7 of the public.
- 8 B. Fair compensation to landowners at all stages of a proposed pipeline or transmission
9 project, including installation, operation and decommissioning.
- 10 C. A clearly defined procedure to handle and resolve landowner complaints.
- 11 D. Strict liability for owners and operators of pipelines and transmission projects for any and
12 all damages caused by any activities related to the installation, operation or
13 decommissioning of the project.
- 14 E. Requirement for a pipeline or transmission project developer to provide the state with
15 proof of financial responsibility prior to commencing a project.
- 16 F. Creation of an indemnity fund to compensate landowners for any damages resulting
17 from a pipeline or transmission project that for any reason are not fairly and adequately
18 compensated by the developer or owner of the project.
- 19 G. A regulatory preference for existing rights-of-way when considering proposed routes for
20 a pipeline or transmission project.
- 21 H. Full consideration of potential impacts to social, human and ecological health when
22 considering a proposed pipeline or transmission project.
- 23 I. A requirement that any project granted eminent domain must be for the public use and
24 benefit of the citizens of Iowa.

25 **Energy**

26 We believe energy is an important part of Iowa's economic future and that agriculture can and
27 will play an important role in Iowa's future energy needs. Therefore we support the re-creation
28 of the office of energy independence for the state of Iowa and if it is not created, the activities of
29 the office should be carried out by another state office.

30 We support the work of a state official to report to the government and legislature regarding
31 Iowa's energy needs and methods to meet those needs within the state of Iowa, to promote
32 renewable sources of energy, and to help develop capital, companies, and resources to make
33 Iowa a net energy producer. This person should focus and coordinate research into
34 environmentally sustainable, locally owned, community based renewable energy sources.

35 We support an increase in the state's renewable electricity standard from 2 percent to 40
36 percent by 2020 and 50 percent by 2030. A renewable energy standard is the amount of
37 renewable energy utilities must purchase or produce from renewable energy production facilities
38 and provide to Iowa consumers. We support state legislation that encourages the utility
39 companies to purchase renewable energy from small farmers and businesses. A significant
40 portion of the standard should be set aside for distributed generation systems to encourage
41 local ownership of these facilities.

42 We oppose the construction of coal plants in Iowa at this time and support implementing the most
43 up-to-date environmental control technology on existing coal plants.

1 We support a state Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). The state income tax credit given to fuel
2 retailers for sale of ethanol should be limited to independent fuel retailers. We support the
3 establishment of a Renewable Fuels Standard that requires that all gasoline sold in Iowa
4 (except for certain exempt purposes) be mixed with renewable fuels. Exempt purposes should
5 include the use of small engine agriculture machinery.

6 We support state legislation that simplifies and standardizes interconnection agreements
7 between utilities and farmers connecting renewable facilities into the power grid. We believe that
8 state incentives for renewable facilities should be aimed at farmer- and community- (at least
9 51% local) owned systems. We also support legislation that protects farmers who enter into
10 lease arrangements with wind farm developers.

11 We believe Iowa should promote, expand, and ensure localized ownership to the fullest degree
12 possible in renewable/alternative energy development including wind, solar, biofuels, and other
13 technologies. Policies that can achieve this goal are: feed-in tariffs, state incentives and
14 mandates for locally owned facilities and tax credits for renewable energy production that can
15 be used to offset active as well as passive income earned by farmers and small businesses.

16 Any new renewable energy facility that receives aid from the state should be 51 percent locally
17 owned. This should include but not be limited to wind, solar, ethanol, and biodiesel.

18 We support amending sales tax code provisions that exempt wind power equipment from sales
19 tax to include other renewable electricity generating equipment (solar, biomass, etc.)

20 We support a road tax exemption for individuals who wish to produce their own biofuels (ethanol
21 or biodiesel) to match the federal exemption (400 gallons).

22 We support the development of new biofuel crops like diversified perennial systems,
23 switchgrass, and sorghum to add to diversity in agriculture and advance the economic and
24 environmental benefits to Iowa and the nation.

25 We support a statewide performance-based energy efficiency resource standard of 2 percent
26 per year for all Iowa utilities.

27 **Environment**

28 WE SUPPORT:

- 29 A. Limitations on the use of atrazine because of the concern for groundwater pollution.
- 30 B. Identification of drainage outlets on agricultural land by the IDNR and the U.S. Army Corps
31 of Engineers for drainage permitting purposes.
- 32 C. More cost share funding for targeted conservation projects from both federal and state
33 sources, coupled with review.
- 34 D. Greater efforts to educate farmers about the potential adverse effects of insecticide use in
35 both the production and storage of grain.
- 36 E. Encouragement of more use of integrated pest-management and integrated weed-
37 management programs and crop rotations.
- 38 F. The recycling of materials used in agriculture, consumer products and industry.
- 39 G. Adequate funding of the Iowa Water and Land Legacy Trust Fund.

40

1 **Genetically Modified Organisms and Biotechnology**

2 We support the adoption of a precautionary principle in the regulatory approval process for the
3 marketing of new genetically modified seeds.

4 We support publicly funded research into the long-term human, animal and ecological health
5 impacts of genetically modified traits deployed in agricultural production.

6 We oppose the patenting of life forms. We further oppose patent holders charging farmers
7 exorbitant technical fees and royalties for access to genetically modified seeds and patented farm
8 animals.

9 We oppose further use of tax dollars in developing terminator technology that would insure that
10 seed will not reproduce. We oppose the development and selling of seed that is sterile.

11 We advocate legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be held
12 strictly liable for safety, human health or environmental problems, including cross-pollination or
13 contamination of neighboring crops related to the use of GMOs, as long as generally accepted
14 crop production practices are followed.

15 If genetically modified organisms are accidentally displaced (through drift, etc.) onto land owned
16 or rented by a farmer, the farmer should not be required to return the crops, or revenue from the
17 crops, which result from the displacement.

18 Damages caused to farmers through lower prices, lost markets, or contamination, shall be full
19 reimbursed to farmers by the company producing the genetically modified product. We advocate
20 that all data used in the analysis of the health and environmental effects of GMOs be public
21 record.

22 Government regulatory agencies shall not license genetically modified products that are not
23 acceptable for both human consumption and animal feed. Government regulatory agencies and
24 input suppliers shall ensure that farmers are informed of all potential market risks and segregation
25 requirements associated with planting any licensed genetically modified crop.

26 All GMO seed shall be clearly labeled with the following information: 1) markets (foreign or
27 domestic) where the product is not accepted: and 2) all planting and handling restrictions. A
28 paper verification system should be put in place to insure input supplies are informing farmers
29 regarding GMO risks and responsibilities.

30 We support a uniform federal standard that requires the clear labeling of agricultural products
31 containing genetically modified material or ingredients.

32 **Land Use Policies**

33 Despite the fact that in over supply situation, the temporary removal of farmland from production
34 may be necessary, irreplaceable farmland must be preserved for food and fiber production. We
35 encourage each county to maintain a zoning committee to ensure the preservation of productive
36 agricultural land and to require the prudent use of such land.

37 WE SUPPORT:

- 1 A. Assistance to family farmers in conservation and the maintenance of an ecological
- 2 balance.
- 3 B. Additional programs to regulate surface mining to prevent destruction of land and water.
- 4 C. Regulating the use of inorganic chemicals.
- 5 D. Restrictions placed on the importation of household or industrial waste for disposal in
- 6 Iowa.

7 A state land preservation and development commission should be established. This commission
8 would consist of three members from each Congressional District, with staggered terms of office.
9 The membership would include an active farmer, a member of a county board of supervisors, and
10 a mayor or councilperson. The commission shall work with the Department of Soil Conservation,
11 with the Department providing support services.

12 The commission shall prepare and recommend to the General Assembly, a state land
13 preservation policy with guidelines for guidance and direction of the state, cities, counties and
14 special districts on matters relating to land use.

15 Land preservation and development organizations should be permanently established at the
16 county level, with membership from farmers, the county Board of Supervisors and mayors or
17 city council members. Among the duties of the county-level organizations would be: protection
18 of agricultural land; solid waste disposal; sewage treatment and collection; water supply and
19 distribution; proper development of industrial, chemical, agricultural, educational, residential,
20 and recreational facilities and areas; and, coordinate county wide transportation systems which
21 include elements of the statewide transportation plan.

22 We are opposed to the use of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to subsidize urban sprawl.

23 **Livestock Concentration**

24 A. County Zoning

25 All Iowa counties should be required to enact zoning ordinances, and counties should be
26 allowed to zone confinement livestock facilities and feedlots.

27 B. Corporate Farming Laws

28 We support a ban on packer ownership of livestock and contract feeding. Additionally, we
29 strongly oppose farm ownership by non-family owned corporations, and we believe that the
30 requirements for authorized family farm corporations, limited partnerships and limited liabilities
31 as contained in Chapter 9H should not be weakened.

32 C. Economic Development

33 *Funding* - We believe established and moderately sized farmers and small businesses should
34 be given equal access to or a preference in economic development programs. Economic
35 development monies should not be given to projects that are not sustainable community
36 development.

37 *Taxes* - Presently Iowa farms are taxed on the basis of their productivity that lowers agriculture's
38 share of the total property tax burden. This tax benefit should not be available to factory hog
39 farms. These factories are comparable to industry and should be taxed at an industrial rate. The

1 pollution control tax credits available to confined animal facilities should be rescinded by the
2 next legislative session.

3 D. Environmental Regulations

4 We support a moratorium on confined feeding operations above 300 animal units until the EPA
5 declares Iowa's waterways unimpaired.

6 The following environmental and health regulations should apply to facilities containing 300 or
7 more animal units (one-time capacity) within a one-mile radius. For the purposes of these
8 regulations, animals belonging to an owner or owners or entity/entities and housed within a one-
9 mile radius are considered one operation.

10 These units are consistent with criteria used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for
11 their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits except for the addition
12 of pigs under 55 lbs.

13 Animal units are measured as follows:

14	0.7 dairy cattle	=	1 animal unit
15	1.0 cattle	=	1 animal unit
16	10.0 sheep	=	1 animal unit
17	0.5 horses	=	1 animal unit
18	2.5 hogs	=	1 animal unit
19	5.0 pigs under 55 lbs	=	1 animal unit
20	5.5 turkeys	=	1 animal unit
21	100 laying hens/broilers	=	1 animal unit (continuous overflow watering)
22	30 laying hens/broilers	=	1 animal unit (liquid manure handling system)

23 E. Operating Permits

24 We support a strengthened master matrix that lowers the requirement for permit applications to
25 300 animal units, requires a greater distance from homes or public places and requires a
26 passing score of 80 percent.

27 Producers meeting the above requirements must obtain an operating permit through the county
28 supervisors in addition to the construction permits required by the Iowa Department of Natural
29 Resources. The permits should be renewed annually after proof of compliance with all existing
30 regulations and the waste management plan. A fee paid by applicants should offset the costs of
31 administration so that no new financial burdens are placed on county governments. The
32 operating permit requirements will be retroactive to cover all facilities over 300 animal units in
33 the state with a period of time allowed for existing operations to come into compliance.

34 *Waste management plan* - A five-year waste management plan must be submitted with the
35 permit application and should be consistent with waste management requirements listed below.
36 The applicant must demonstrate enough acres owned, leased or contracted for disposal of
37 manure. A copy of the plan shall be kept as part of the public record and kept on file at the
38 county courthouse.

39 *Bonding* - In order to protect counties from potentially devastating clean up costs of waste
40 storage systems, large producers should be required to have a surety bond sufficient to return

1 land to its original condition. The bonds should be secured by the owner before operating
2 permits are granted. These bonding requirements should be retroactive for existing facilities
3 over 1,000 animal units. If bonding is not available, money should be deposited in an escrow
4 account for this purpose.

5 F. Waste management

6 We support utilizing additional research to determine appropriate managed grazing techniques
7 that protect the quality of water, including buffer areas and fencing along streams where
8 appropriate. There should be adequate funding and increased cost share for the installation of
9 controls and features that will allow farmers to transition away from the practice of watering
10 livestock in open surface waterways.

11 For operations with greater than 300 animal units within a 1-mile radius, we recommend the
12 following requirements:

13 -Waste management plans should be long term and should be based on soil tests, the
14 nutrient content of manure and the fertility needs of crops.

15 -Manure application rates should be based on the phosphorus (P) needs of crops. The
16 amount to apply should be based on recent soil tests (within present crop rotation) and
17 on recent (within 5 years) chemical analysis of the manure. Application should be done
18 so as not to exceed the maximum efficiency of the nutrients.

19 No EQIP money should be provided to livestock confinement operations over 300 animal units.

20 Regardless of the particular nutrient used to determine rate of application, the following
21 requirements should apply:

22 -Manure should not be applied in excessive amounts on ground that will be planted into
23 soybeans. Surface application of manure should not be allowed during the fall on fields
24 having produced soybeans during the prior growing season unless all field edges
25 bordering waterways are seeded to a perennial crop.

26 -Manure should be applied as close to planting time as possible. If fall applications must
27 be made (due to wet fields, etc.) they should not be made before soil temperature is 50
28 degrees and cooling.

29 -Application to frozen soil should be prohibited. In the case of extreme emergencies,
30 manure may be applied to frozen ground with the approval of county supervisors at a
31 public meeting, but should not be applied on slopes that exceed 4 percent.

32 - Manure must be injected or incorporated immediately or as soon as weather permits
33 after application to reduce odor and nutrient losses. Disposal of waste through irrigation
34 gun method should be prohibited.

35 An inspection pipe should be required at the lowest point of tile surrounding the berm of the
36 lagoon. The Department of Natural Resources should inspect the tile lines twice a year.

37 Lagoon requirements should be based on the best available technologies to prevent leaching,
38 spills and vapors. These requirements might include: covers, foliage barriers around the

1 lagoons and cement lined bottoms and sidewalls. Until lagoon requirements can be formulated
2 and proven to meet tight environmental and health safety standards, a moratorium should be
3 enacted on the construction of new lagoons or earthen storage structures.

4 G. Setback requirements

5 *Residences* - The facilities (buildings and lagoons) should be set back by 2.5 feet per animal
6 unit from a residence unless written permission is obtained from the neighbors. The setback
7 requirement should not exceed two miles.

8 *Adjoining Property* - A facility should be set back a minimum of 150 feet from a property line.

9 *Buffer zones* - The DNR should establish setbacks of at least one-half mile from the outside
10 perimeter of buildings and lagoons to streams, lakes, drainage wells and other waters in the
11 state where the land is level. Distances should be greater for land with more slope.

12 The facilities cannot be closer than two (2) miles to an established county, state or national park
13 or public recreation area and wildlife management areas.

14 H. Additional Regulations

15 Environmental Impact Study (EIS) - A complete EIS should be done by a bonded environmental
16 engineer prior to the issuance of construction permits. Residents should be notified within 5
17 miles of the proposed site prior to testing or sampling for permits.

18 *DNR Funding* - The DNR should be adequately funded to do core sampling at lagoon sites
19 themselves and to do periodic inspections of facilities. Financing of enforcement should be
20 done through a check-off system on a per head basis by those operations to which these
21 regulations apply (greater than 300 animal units).

22 I. Human and animal health

23 1. Employee protections - Employees should be given written warnings (in the language of the
24 employee if possible) on the health impacts of working in these facilities.

25 - Employees must be at least 18 years old.

26 - Health insurance should be paid by the employer during time of employment. The
27 employer should be responsible for any health costs that are a result of working in the
28 facilities for up to five years after termination of employment.

29 - Employers should pay for annual physical exams of employees if not covered by an
30 insurance policy.

31 - The Iowa Department of Public Health should develop rules that require the posting of
32 signs at the facilities concerning health risks.

33 2. The State of Iowa should regulate ambient air emissions from industrial livestock facilities.
34 When developing regulations, public officials should utilize all relevant research on the subject.
35 Education on health risks of large livestock facilities to neighboring residents should be made
36 available and there should be a central place in the state to report such problems.

1 3. Animal health concerns - We recommend stricter controls and testing of transported animals
2 (dead or alive). Special consideration should be given to the transportation across state lines.

3 **Nuisance Lawsuit Protection**

4 We are opposed to nuisance lawsuit protection, as it has unfairly reallocated property rights to
5 industrial operations bearing little, if any, resemblance to family farming. We support the holding
6 by the Iowa Supreme Court that a statute providing protection against nuisance lawsuits is
7 unconstitutional, and we urge the Iowa Legislature not to pass a "Right to Farm" bill.

8 **Rural Electric Cooperatives**

9 We are opposed to RECs furnishing electricity to large farms and/or businesses at a discount rate
10 below average cost to family farm members of the same cooperative.

11 RECs need to be regulated similarly to the investor utilities, with a focus on net metering, feed-in
12 tariffs, a renewable electricity standard, interconnection standards, and efficiency standards.

13 **Rural Water**

14 We feel that rural water delivery systems are a viable alternative for rural residents when
15 contamination of rural wells and ponds is a real possibility. Rural water systems should not be
16 viewed as an alternative to good environmental policy. Rural water systems should not be used
17 as a tool to encourage urban sprawl.

18 **Water Quality**

19 Farmers are proud to serve as stewards of our land and water, and they have been asked to
20 invest significant time, acres and dollars in implementing conservation and pollution control
21 measures on their farms as part of the state's strategy to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus
22 pollution and improve the quality of Iowa watersheds. To ensure that both farmers' resources
23 and public funds are expended in a cost-effective manner,

24 **WE SUPPORT:**

- 25 A. Requirements and standards for water quality monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of
26 projects once they have been installed.
- 27 B. A 20-year timeline, with 5-year interim benchmarks, for measuring progress toward the
28 overall goal of 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.
- 29 C. The establishment of local watershed goals that support the statewide goal for reducing
30 nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.
- 31 D. Adequate and sustainable funding to support the nutrient reduction strategy.
- 32 E. Greater efforts to design targeted conservation planning and incentives (e.g., installation
33 of wetlands, bioreactors, riparian buffers, etc.) and strategically allocate funding to
34 facilitate conservation in areas that are the most critical for watershed health.
- 35 F. The adoption of a watershed approach to restoring and protecting Iowa's surface and
36 ground water that incorporates comprehensive assessment, planning, implementation,
37 and monitoring of all water contaminants.
- 38 G. Authorization and funding for a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that
39 includes the monitoring of private wells, to better assess the level of contamination of
40 private well water and the public health impact on rural residents.

1 **Wildlife Management**

2 Because wildlife damage to farm crops is severe in some areas of the state, we request that all
3 special permits to hunt on a farmer's own land or land rented by the farmer continue to be issued
4 free of charge to the applying owner or renter and members of the producer's residing family, and
5 that the restrictions be the same as for paid permits.

1 **III. RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMY**

2 **Banking**

3 The Iowa Farmers Union opposes the concept of Interstate banking.

4 WE SUPPORT:

5 A. High levels of community reinvestment standards for all banks operating in Iowa.

6 B. Strict enforcement of those standards.

7 C. Access to Federal Reserve monies for small lenders at the same discount rate as the
8 large interstate lenders.

9 D. An investigation into the creation of a state bank for the purpose of economic development
10 within the state of Iowa.

11 **Boycott**

12 Be it resolved that the Iowa Farmers Union at the discretion of the Board of Directors may call for
13 a boycott of products from any company whose officers lobby, give speeches or whose actions
14 are detrimental to the survival of the family farm.

15 **Cooperatives**

16 We support a co-op bill of rights to aid members in regaining active independent producer-
17 control of management salaries and co-op activities that may not be in the interest of its
18 members or family farm agriculture. We support cooperative structure that requires payout of
19 retained equity when a member becomes inactive in production agriculture. We support
20 restricting voting stock and ownership to farmer members of the co-op. We support restricting
21 non-farmer investor control of farmer cooperatives.

22 **Economic Development**

23 We believe that economic development efforts by the State of Iowa should develop economic
24 activity by utilizing the strengths of our state: productive soils and abundant natural resources,
25 innovative people with a strong work ethic, and a spirit of cooperation and community. We feel
26 that an emphasis should be placed on the development of small businesses that provide jobs
27 paying a living wage. We feel that efforts should encourage the production, processing, and
28 retailing of local foods.

29 We support raising the minimum wage in Iowa to \$12 per hour and then incrementally to \$15 per
30 hour over the course of 2 years, and that the minimum wage should then be indexed to increase
31 with inflation.

32 We support the creation of four (4) regional economic development boards to replace the
33 statewide Iowa Economic Development Authority.

34 We strongly oppose efforts to privatize economic development activities of the state of Iowa.

35

1 **Education**

2 We support immediate discontinuation of income tax credits for private school tuition, in any form,
3 as they are detrimental to our public school system.

4 We favor the repeal of the state law that allows the additional levee of 10% tax by school boards
5 without a referendum.

6 We support changing state law concerning bond issues for school districts so that bond issues
7 could be paid for by at least a 50% income surtax, but requiring 60% of votes to pass bond issues,
8 until such time as all property is taxed, not just land and buildings.

9 We support efforts to encourage new legal immigrants to become functioning members of the
10 community.

11 **Elections**

12 We urge a limitation on the amount of money spent for elections by candidates for public office.

13 WE SUPPORT:

- 14 A. Development of a system of public financing.
- 15 B. Legislation to require a 3-year waiting period before state elected officials and/or political
16 appointees may be paid to lobby the Iowa Legislature after leaving their governmental
17 positions.
- 18 C. Electoral reforms that encourage wide voter participation.

19 **Family Issues**

20 We urge the courts to enforce more severe punishment of persons convicted of domestic abuse
21 and sexual and physical abuse.

22 **Health Care**

23 We support a national "single payer" health insurance program, which would save money and
24 guarantee access to a quality health care for all Americans. Until such program is established,

25 WE SUPPORT:

- 26 A. A "single payer" health insurance program for the state of Iowa.
- 27 B. Iowa's participation in the expansion of Medicaid, as provided for in the Affordable Care
28 Act.
- 29 C. Aggressive elimination of Medicare and Medicaid abuses.
- 30 D. Patient rehabilitation and prevention programs and anti-smoking efforts funded by liquor
31 tax revenue and Iowa's share of tobacco company settlements.

32 **Taxes**

33 There should be no federal deductibility with Iowa income tax rates adjusted downward. Persons
34 earning less than \$25,000 should be exempt from paying state income tax. Married people

1 making \$35,000 or less (combined) should be exempt from paying state income tax. Earned and
2 passive income should be taxed progressively at the same rate.

3 We urge the Legislature to enact a three factor corporate tax in place of the present single factor
4 tax.

5 We urge enactment of a graduated land tax. We recommend that the legislature appropriate
6 sufficient funds to pay agricultural land tax credits in full. Ag land tax credit should not go to out-of-
7 state landholders. We urge the Legislature to prohibit transfer of additional tax liabilities by the
8 Executive Branch to property tax rolls in time of economic emergency. New sources of revenue
9 must be found to finance the schools and the county government, to lessen the dependence on
10 property taxes. We recommend that all income producing properties held by nonprofit
11 organizations and other institutions should be placed back on the income and property tax rolls.

12 Intangible property, as well as monies and credits, should be taxed at comparable rates to real
13 property. We oppose property tax abatement on all new constructions.

14 Iowa should immediately eliminate the pollution control property tax exemption for confinement
15 buildings holding more than 300 units.

16 We should enact a property tax exemption for conservation buffers along rivers, lakes, and
17 streams.

18 WE SUPPORT:

- 19 A. Repeal of the sales tax on grain storage.
- 20 B. Requiring mineral rights holders to pay a portion of property taxes assessed against that
21 land.
- 22 C. Tax laws that create opportunities for beginning farmers, as opposed to corporate or
23 foreign ownership.
- 24 D. Extending the Family Farm Tax Credit to include all farms, including farms operating on
25 less than 10 acres.
- 26 E. Continuation of the wind energy tax credit as a transferable tax credit.
- 27 F. Classification of industrial farms as commercial property instead of agricultural.

28 **Transportation**

29 We believe that all monies acquired through gas taxes and road use taxes should be used only to
30 maintain our highways, roadways, and bridges and not for recreational projects. A program
31 should be developed to upgrade rural road bridges to handle legal weights.

32 In the interests of moving farm products to market and to facilitate movement of goods to the
33 farmers, we approve of state financial assistance for repair of railroad right-of-ways and urges that
34 the program be expanded and that financing goes to the actual repair of railroad beds.

35 We favor public and private ownership of railroad beds, allowing any carrier of freight or
36 passengers to operate over them for a fee. Amtrak service should be continued across Iowa.

37 We support the participation by the state of Iowa in the Midwest Rail Compact, including the
38 purpose of connecting Midwest cities by high-speed passenger rail.

1 Our present two lane highways and farm-to-market roads must be repaired and upgraded where
2 necessary. Bridge repair is greatly needed on many of the highways, and rural roads, and the
3 process should begin immediately.

4 We appreciate the public health and environmental benefits that are derived by citizens utilizing
5 and enjoying bicycles. In order to ensure safe roads and highways, we support policies that will
6 encourage the use of highly visible and reflective clothing and equipment, that will increase the
7 use of bicycle helmets, and that will enforce the laws for all moving vehicles.