

## **Missouri Farmers Union Policy Statement**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To represent, protect and enhance economic interests and way of life of Missouri family farmers and ranchers and to preserve their rural communities by supporting the sustainable production of food, fuel and fiber.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

To grow membership so that MFU is heard throughout Missouri and influences state and federal policy while enhancing and stabilizing its financial position.

### **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Missouri Farmers Union (MFU), strive to achieve and implement the fundamental agricultural principles necessary for a domestically produced food supply system and an independently owned family farm structure.

The goals of MFU come from our experiences as family farmers, rural residents, and democratically informed citizens, our understanding of nature, as well as deep respect for our country, and for past, present, and future generations.

We believe cooperation comes from knowledge of, and respect for, other people and cultures. Our spirit of cooperation must continue to grow and not have limits. Our challenge is to take this knowledge and spirit and incorporate it into meaningful policy through legislation on local, state, and national levels.

We believe justice demands an independently owned, family farm system as the foundation for healthy rural communities and proper stewardship of all natural resources.

We believe strong and productive family farm agriculture is essential to our national security and food safety, and should be a priority when formulating national security and effective food safety policy.

This document springs from the spirit of Missouri family farmers and ranchers, and all those that make up MFU.

### **FOUNDATIONS OF A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE POLICY**

MFU recognizes that food is a universal human right and must be made available for all people. We support agricultural policy that is directed towards and beneficial to independently owned and operated family farms. We recognize the role of all land and natural resources, and seek to promote policies and practices that enhance and preserve their intrinsic value and mitigate their misuse.

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An agriculture program should provide stability and fairness as well as:

- Ensure access to the resources necessary for the continuation of sustainable family farms, to include land, seed, livestock, nutrients, fair markets, clean air and water, healthy soils, resilient local communities, and access to appropriate publicly available research and technology;
- Ensure an adequate and safe food supply system for all people;
- Promote links between family farm producers, and consumers;
- Enhance the potential for profitability through appropriate legislative and regulatory mechanisms while maintaining the integrity of state and federal constitutions;
- Direct farm program benefits toward family farming operations;
- Allow planting flexibility for farmers and ranchers;
- Promote adequate land stewardship and conservation practices;
- Enable producers to derive farm income from the market place;
- Provide an adequate economic safety net;
- Support livestock, pollinator and specialty crop producers through food and farm policy and programs;
- Support livestock, pollinators and specialty crops so as to be included in insurance, production or revenue loss payments.
- Promote effective supply management programs.
- Promote secure and sustainable food systems that minimize waste and maximize nutrition
- Promote programs that would allow the entrance of young and beginning farmers into family farming; and
- Protect the traditional and historical right of farmers to save their own plant and animal life for reproduction.

### **AGRICULTURAL LABOR**

The National Labor Relations Act should be extended to workers on corporate and other farms that employ enough hired help to be subject to the federal minimum wage provisions applicable to agricultural workers.

- Strengthen worker protection standards regarding wage rates, health, safety and housing conditions for migrant, seasonal, minority and other farm laborers and for the education of their children.

We oppose:

- Revisions to rules regarding persons under age 16 and 18 performing various farm jobs.

### **BIOTECHNOLOGY**

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have created a series of ethical, environmental, food safety, legal, market, and structural issues that impact everyone in the food chain. Consumer and producer concerns must be addressed.

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- Restrict the release of new biotechnology-based products predicated on the "precautionary principle" and release only those products that have proven beneficial effects for family farmers, consumers and the environment;
- Increase monitoring and surveillance by government regulatory agencies over biotechnology;
- Maintain genetic biodiversity and the purity of the gene pool;
- Support mandatory labeling that lists specific types of GMO's in a product;
- Oppose the release of biotechnology that has not been FDA approved for human consumption or that is detrimental to the export market;
- Oppose the release of GMO plant varieties or hybrids before they are approved for distribution through all major U.S. export markets
- Support legislation to exempt farmers from paying royalties on patented farm animals and technical fees on seeds which have been genetically modified;
- Support legislation to prohibit the patenting of heritage seed, animal and biological genetics;
- Support legislation to prohibit the further use of tax dollars in developing terminator technology, e.g., a gene to ensure that seed will not reproduce;
- Support legislation to prohibit the development and selling of seed that is sterile;
- Ensure the right of farmers to plant seed derived from proprietary organisms on their own land;
- Require new products involving GMOs, to include bio-pharmaceutical crops, to be certified as safe by the FDA in testing done independently of the patent holder, and before being allowed on the market. Such testing is to be done at the expense of the specific patent holders seeking to market such products;
- Oppose genetically modifying crops to withstand 2, 4-D
- Support legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be held strictly liable for damages caused by genetic trespass including safety, health, economic and environmental problems, and cross pollination related to the use of GMOs;
- Require patent holders maintain federal registration after the expiration of the patent to allow generic use.
- Require technology fees to be fully revealed and any agricultural seed or product upon which a technology fee is collected to be guaranteed for its performance
- Support congressional action to regulate the biotech industry's technology agreements. Farmers should not have to sign away their fundamental rights, including, but not limited to a jury of their peers in court, in exchange for the privilege of growing biotech crops. Grievances should be settled in the home state of the farmer, not the state of the biotech corporation;
- Reimburse farmers for any damages caused by lower prices, lost markets or genetic contamination, including legal fees, by the company producing the genetically engineered organism;

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- Support legislation that protects family farmers from liability and awards them real and punitive damages resulting from biotechnology contamination due to industry negligence; and
- Support the recall of all genetically engineered products that have not met the “precautionary principal”.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION**

Anchored in science, data and analysis, MFU gives full recognition that global warming is taking place and that there are negative impacts from climate change on food, agriculture and the environment. These changes and impacts draw family farmers, ranchers and rural communities to recognize not only practical agricultural concerns, but to take the actions necessary to mitigate and/or stop negative impacts from further affecting food, agriculture and environment. It is imperative to draw on the moral and ethical values and principles that define our concern for neighbor and all of creation to aid us in the development of climate sensitive policies and practices, and to more clearly recognize the Earth as home to all people for all time and what must be done to preserve its soils, water, air, plants and creatures.

Continued research and analysis are essential to better understand the current impacts, as well as, the long-range effects of ongoing climate change. Immediate implementation of policies, programs, practices, and strategies to effectively manage, mitigate and stop climate change must be enacted at all levels of government, by the private sector and within local communities. MFU supports farmers, ranchers and all producers doing their part to employ practices and support policies that will stem the tide of negative climate impacts and change.

- Support farmer and rancher consultation at all levels of government and public policy, as the U.S. moves to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and create better conservation and farming practices
- Support carbon sequestration by agricultural producers
- Enhance research on effective methods for agricultural carbon sequestration
- Support implementation of green payments to agricultural producers for carbon sequestration as an agricultural conservation practice that protects the environment and enhances income for farmers through carbon credits
- Support research on agricultural practices to clearly identify those practices contributing to further global warming and those that would mitigate and reduce greenhouse gasses and climate change.

## **CONCENTRATION**

Consolidation of multi-national food/agribusinesses threatens the existence of family farmers and healthy rural communities as well as a safe food supply.

- Enact a moratorium on approval of mega-agribusiness mergers;
- Support Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration’s (GIPSA) improved interpretation and enforcement of the Packers and Stockyard (P&S) Act

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- of 1921 which support fair markets for family farmers and ranchers as well as consumers;
- Urge Congress to provide adequate funding for anti-trust and P&S enforcement;
- Prevent any company or cooperative, including farmer-owned coops, from requiring farmers to accept bundled grain and livestock input sources;
- Enact legislation that establishes a level of concentration that is prima facie proof of antitrust violation;
- Support legislation to amend the Clayton Antitrust Act to make it clear that a person who suffers indirect as well as direct harm can recover damages for any anti-competitive practice;
- Promote and enforce anti-trust remedies that prevent concentration on the global level for companies doing business in the U.S; and
- Oppose joint ventures or mergers between cooperative lenders and multi-national corporations.

## **WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY**

Family farmers are conscious of their responsibility to preserve and conserve water resources for current and future use.

- Call upon family farmers to conserve and preserve our water in their farming practices and in their rural communities.
- Assist family farmers in the mitigation of agricultural runoff in ways that lower levels of nitrates and pesticides in farm land runoff and that reduces erosion through the use of cover crops, no-till, site specific applications of farm chemicals, and other conservation practices.
- Assist family farmers at the local, state and federal levels with policy and regulatory tools in the mitigation of agricultural runoff.

## **CONSERVATION**

Our society, including family farmers, has a responsibility to maintain and improve the quality of soil and water resources. MFU should work to achieve the mutually beneficial objectives of proper stewardship and the maintenance of family farm agriculture.

- Support full funding and implementation of the Conservation Security Program as passed in the 2002 Farm Bill, and reauthorized as the Conservation Stewardship Program in the 2008 Farm Bill;
- Encourage participation by family farmers and family farm advocates on the State Technical Committee;
- Support targeting of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) payments to small and medium sized farms and ranches
- Support making all farm and ranch programs readily and easily accessible by family farmers and ranchers;
- Support CRP land used responsibly for haying and grazing;
- Support statewide programs that promote and assist sustainable agriculture;

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- Initiate a collaborative effort to develop an effective and balanced policy for the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers;
- Favor flood control as the number one priority of river management;
- Require enforcement of “tolerable soil loss” not to exceed 2T (T-value; as determined by NRCS) in order to receive crop insurance;
- Continue an effective Conservation Reserve Program that strengthens family farms, ranches and rural communities.

## CONTRACTS

Currently production and marketing contracts contribute to the captive supply of agricultural products and threaten the existence of independent producers.

- Support policies that protect the rights of farmers who engage in contract agriculture;
- Support updating, clarifying, and enforcing Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) rules;
- Protect contracting livestock farmers’ rights under GIPSA; GIPSA;
- Establish policy that protects seed purchasers from contract liabilities;
- Provide publicly open/posted contracts through USDA and the Dept. of Justice for all commodities and livestock to include poultry and private marketing agreements;
- Establish a legal defense fund to support independent family farmers and producers who engage in contract agriculture and/or utilize patented agricultural inputs, which is funded by a check-off on large-scale integrators and gene patent holders;
- Support agricultural fair practices through federal bargaining legislation;
- Provide a fair trial before a jury of peers rather than mandated arbitration; Award producers just compensation in the event a company and/or contractor cancels a contract through no fault of the producer.

## COOPERATIVES

The purpose of a cooperative (co-op) is to serve all its members. Family farmer owned co-ops are effective tools through which family farmers reduce the costs of production, maintain a reliable source of inputs and effectively market and process farm products.

- Oppose cooperative involvement in production agriculture in ways that put co-ops in adverse competition with their family farmer/producer owners;
- Urge co-op owners/members to provide the education, leadership and management necessary to effectively run local co-ops;
- Encourage the organization and growth of community credit unions as an effective means of rural reinvestment and re-vitalization;
- Enhance access to capital for community-based cooperatives and other farmer controlled entities that engage in value-added activity that sustains Missouri farm families and rural communities;

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- Promote the development of broadband communication cooperatives that would provide the opportunity for access by all rural residents; Encourage the formation of value-added cooperative efforts that are formed for the welfare of the local community, that are producer owned, controlled through democratic processes and leadership, and whose business affairs are responsive to and for the benefit of all its members.

## **DAIRY**

Dairy prices should sustain viable family farms.

- Support regional milk marketing compacts;
- Support developing a new basic formula for pricing (BFP) milk;
- Establish, through BFP, a floor price that applies to all classes of milk;
- Support mandatory dairy price reporting;
- Measure dairy policy fairness by its ability to:
  - o Produce reasonable profit for producers;
  - o Provide a high-quality, stable supply for consumers;
  - o Promote sustainable environmental practices; and
  - o Enable producers to enter and exit farming;
- Eliminate exclusivity practices by contract buyers toward dairy producers; e.g. canceling dairy producers' milk contracts when they hold back any portion of their milk to sell for any other purpose; and
- Support farmer and retailer rights to label milk BST free, and the consumers' right to know.
- Oppose state of Missouri giving Missouri tax incentives to out of state dairy conglomerates.

## **ECONOMIC AND TAX POLICY**

### **Credit**

We support:

- Access to credit, technical expertise and markets as essential ingredients in securing opportunities for rural and agricultural enterprises;
- Appropriate utilization of the Community Reinvestment Act to support family farms and rural communities.

### **Estate Tax**

We also support:

- An estate tax structure that enables and promotes the transfer of family farms to the next generation and oppose a full repeal of estate tax.

### **Taxes**

We support:

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- A more equitable, progressive, and sustainable federal and state tax structures that allows the majority of people to pay less because those with the very highest incomes pay more;
- A tax system that fairly and adequately provides revenues for the programs and services that are essential to good governance and the general welfare;
- Full deductibility for individual payment of premiums for health care, long-term care, and disability;
- Provisions in the tax code that reduce concentrations of wealth and power, and promote equality of economic opportunity; and
- A refundable federal and state earned income tax that allows the working poor to keep more of their earned income.

### **1031 Exchanges**

We support:

- Reform of the tax code to eliminate or restructure 1031 Exchanges in such a way that they do not work against the interests of family farmers, rural communities, and the common good.

### **ENERGY**

Energy is the lifeblood of our mechanized society and intertwines with food security. Dependence on foreign sources of fuel threatens not only our way of life but also the ability of family farmers to raise the food, fuel and fiber on which our nation depends.

- Urge development of open market community-based, sustainable, alternative, and renewable fuel and energy production systems;
- Encourage research and utilization of alternative sources of energy for Missouri, to include wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, bio-diesel, hybrid technology, innovative battery technology and other alternative fuel sources;
- Continue prohibition on the use of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in reformulated gasoline to be sold in the state of Missouri;
- Support labeling of all fuel products containing ethanol;
- Support efforts to establish refueling stations for alternative fuels i.e. E85 stations, bio-diesel capabilities at truck stops and card stations, and blender pumps;
- Strongly encourage and support energy conservation;
- Allow rural electrical cooperatives to provide utility service to new customers and local communities in areas in which they currently are prohibited due to population increase caps;
- Support net metering of utilities that target and benefit individual rate payers and family farmers;
- Support targeting government assistance for green energy programs to family farmers and community-based local businesses;
- Support education, research and development for production of cellulosic energy sources;

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- Support regulation of utility companies;
- Support access to dependable, consistent, affordable, sustainable utilities for all rural areas;
- Support aggressive expansion and acceleration of the Renewable Fuels Standard, (e.g., 20% sustainable and renewable by the year 2020), open market net metering and other incentives that focus on the production of community-based, locally owned, renewable energy such as cellulosic, wind, solar, geothermal and biomass;
- Support the creation of a farm stored Strategic Renewable Energy Reserve, dedicated to the storage and production of community-based energy feedstocks to ensure a dependable long-term, uninterrupted supply of these raw materials.
- Support uniform state-wide taxation of renewable energy systems, established by the State Tax Commission, and based on project cost. Family farm renewable energy systems should not be taxed as corporate and/or public utilities.
- Oppose the process known as fracking in the state of Missouri.

### **FOOD SECURITY AND SAFETY**

Food security is anchored in local agriculture, family farming and ranching, use of sustainable food and farming practices, economic viability, ready access, affordability and availability for consumers.

The food system should:

- Eliminate poverty and hunger;
- Provide consumers with an adequate, high quality, safe food supply
- Support the decentralization of the food production, distribution and supply;
- Promote food sovereignty for individual countries.
- Support development of Missouri-local food, fiber and energy production
- Disallow any Missouri tax revenue and/or public institutions from supporting or subsidizing any industrialized food, fiber or energy exports from any non-Missouri corporation using Missouri land and resources.

### **QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL MISSOURI**

#### **Health Care**

We strongly affirm the right of all Americans to have access to affordable, quality health care. Access to health care services is sorely deficient in many, if not most, of the rural areas of the state. Obtaining health care services is especially difficult for the rural elderly who can no longer drive and live in those areas where public and affordable transportation services do not exist. Family farmers notably are lacking in health care coverage. Being in an occupation considered more dangerous than most others increases health insurance rates for family farmers. Further, most health insurers have considerably higher rates for single family coverage, and there is no provision for group rates among family farmers.

Comprehensive health care should include:

- Universal single-payer health care access;

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- Emergency services more accessible to rural residents;
- Legislation that would allow/facilitate the development of alliances between/ among family farmers, small businesses and the self-employed that would help them secure affordable health care coverage;
- Publicly provided health care for all children 0 to 18 years of age;
- Elimination of control by insurance companies over prescription drugs;
- Removal of the so called, “donut hole”;
- Full coverage for all prescription drugs;
- Expansion of Medicaid in Missouri as allowed in the ACA;
- Subscription drug prices based on Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved rates.

## Immigration Policy

Immigration is a national issue and should be addressed at the federal level. State agricultural worker programs should operate in conjunction with federal immigration policies. Collectively, our federal and state immigration system must be flexible enough to address the needs of businesses while protecting the interests of workers and keeping families together. We support:

- A visa system responsive to geographic, economic and cultural factors and that recognizes the beneficial contributions of immigrant workers
- Enforcement of immigration policies that focuses on public safety and consequences to businesses, workers and consumers.
- A sensible path for complying immigrants to become participating members of our society, and oppose the indentured servitude of a captive work force.
- Moving forward with a worker visa program for immigrants who are working on farms and ranches, including both seasonal and full time workers, and implementing the DREAM act.

## Freedom and Liberties

Equality of rights should be provided for all farm operations and their owners, regardless of size of operation, race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or religion of their owners and operators. We support:

- Freedom of speech. Targeting whistleblowers denies every citizen’s right to know where their food came from, how and under what conditions it was produced. Secrecy imposed on photographs, writing, and investigative reporting prevents adequate transparency and impedes public welfare.
- The right of individual privacy balanced by the public’s right to know.
- Laws, policies and regulations that equally protect the rights of all family farms.
- Contract growers not being subject to mandatory arbitration and non-disclosure of disputes.
- Use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) for agricultural purposes only after landowner approval;

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- Opening up the National Airspace System to allow drones for agricultural purposes;
- Restriction on the use of drones for covert surveillance of agricultural operations that is not in the public interest.

### **Information Collection and Protection**

- We support the collection and use of detailed field data in a manner that:
  - Protects the privacy of Personally Identifiable Information;
  - Avoids consolidation of market power;
  - Maintains competition; Prevents market manipulation
  - Protects ownership of data.

## **LABELING**

### **Country-of-Origin**

We believe consumers should have the information necessary to make informed decisions about the origins of their food.

- Support mandatory country of origin labeling for all food products;
- In lieu of a mandatory country of origin labeling law, we support a voluntary label that preserves the product of the U.S.A. labeling standards;
- Allow consumers to make informed food choices through adequate product labeling;
- Label “Product of the U.S.” only those products 100% produced/born/raised/processed inside the U.S.;
- Ensure products coming into the U.S. are not being minimally processed and/or blended inside the U.S., thus making them eligible to obtain a “USDA Inspected” label and to be marketed as a U.S. product.

### **Attribution**

- We oppose the insincere and abusive use of the terms sustainable agriculture, family farm, organic, natural and green by corporations for marketing purposes.

## **LIVESTOCK**

- Strengthen the Packers and Stockyards Act and Anti-trust laws;
- Urge the Secretary Of Agriculture to enforce Packers & Stockyards laws;
- Oppose vertical integration by processors into production agriculture;
- Support anti-trust legislation to limit the market-share percentage of captive supplies;
- Support ban on packer ownership of livestock feeding operations, including corporate ownership or corporate financing of non-farmer owned operations;
- Urge Congress to supply adequate funding for family farm based agricultural programs;

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- Promote the development of local and regional livestock processing facilities that enhance the profitability of independent producers through open and competitive bidding;
- Support a meat inspection, grading, and labeling system that protects food safety and quality, and the integrity of the family farm food system;
- Support the right of processors to access domestic and international markets that demand source-verified or BSE-tested livestock;
- Oppose any system of mandatory animal, or premise identification;
- Maintain and actively support the current effective state-by-state systems that are in place to identify animal disease and provide traceability;
- Oppose privatization of pet breeder inspections;
- Support fair and thorough inspection and regulation of pet breeders throughout the nation;
- Precede any rule change in the USDA Animal Welfare Act with an appropriate comment period and only then record it in the Federal Register;
- Support teaching animal welfare through educational programs and agricultural organizations;
- Support humane treatment of all animals;
- Provide all domesticated animals with proper food, shelter and water for survival;
- Support USDA inspected humane harvesting of livestock including horses for meat markets, and
- Support stringent federal and state oversight and regulation of “animal disease research laboratories,” and that subject small and local communities to environmental and public health consequences of dangerous pathogens. Of particular concern are areas of significant livestock production and small and local communities, which could be devastated by a breach of quarantine and security.
- Support those measures that assure equal and fair treatment under the laws that guarantee soil, air, and water quality without exception.

## **LOCAL CONTROL**

In a democratic system of government, elected public officials make many decisions that have a profound impact on the lives and wellbeing of its citizens. We believe that people have a right to participate in decisions that affect them and that the best decisions of government, business or civil organizations are made when those affected participate in the decision-making process.

- Support county governments ability to maintain their democratic rights to enact health ordinances that protect the public health of their citizens;
- Support legislation that enables local government (i.e. municipal, township, county) to enact ordinances, planning, and zoning that serve the best interests of the local community and that are democratically enacted;
- Oppose state and federal government, or any international and/or quasi-governmental or private structure, from enacting laws, regulations or rules that

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- give them the ability to put in place sanctions, or to otherwise impede or negate the right of local communities to enact labor, environmental, health, or safety laws, regulations, ordinances, planning, or zoning that serve the best interests of the local community.
- Support citizens of Missouri having the right to know the extent of foreign entities expressing interest in, and ownership of, Missouri farmland and commercial privileges.
- Oppose foreign entities from acquiring Missouri agricultural lands, or holding federal grazing allotments or commercial privileges in Missouri.
- Oppose the allocation of state tax incentives based solely on Agri-Ready compliance.

## PATENTING

- Disallow any person to sell, distribute, or use a non-germinating, genetically engineered seed rendered incapable of naturally producing second-generation seed (including terminator and/ or suicide seeds);
- Oppose any new commercial patenting of life forms;
- Support the promotion of research in and commercialization of high quality, conventionally bred, and non-genetically modified seed.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### Public Schools

- Oppose unfunded federal mandates to state and local school authorities;
- Support publicly funded, community based schools with reasonable child-to-teacher ratios;
- Support adequate and equitable funding of rural schools;
- Support adequate and equitable funding of public pre-K-12 and higher education;
- Support free and affordable public education from pre-K through bachelor's or technical degree.
- Support local level decision making regarding consolidation of school districts;
- Oppose forced school district consolidation by the Missouri General Assembly;
- Oppose giving control of public schools to private enterprises such as charter or contract schools, and all school voucher programs;
- Promote farm-to-cafeteria and other local food programs;
- Support serving only wholesome, nutritious food in public schools and other institutions;
- Support legislation that funds and requires all Missouri public schools to provide free breakfast, lunch and after school meals to low income children, with meals prepared solely from food produced in the United States.

### State Assisted

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We support funds and/or loan guarantees that are administered by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, as well as all other state-assisted programs that may benefit agriculture and be directed to the needs of independent family farmers/producers.

### **Social Security**

We support:

- Active participation in developing a plan to help insure the solvency for Social Security for future years;
- Prohibition of using social security funds for anything other than its intended use;
- Preserving a major portion of any budget surplus for Social Security;
- Opposition to a freeze on the Social Security cost-of-living allowance;
- Social Security tax being applicable to all earnings by removal of the income cap;
- Opposition to any part of Social Security being invested in non-government-insured investments;
- Social Security being a mandatory, universal system to assure benefits in the future;
- Continued strengthening and protecting of the Social Security program;
- Opposition to proposals that would privatize the system;
- Continuation of efforts made to correct an inequity in Social Security benefits for recipients born during “notch” years, which results in reduced entitlements for basically the same level of contributions;
- Congress changing laws so that a husband and wife who are equal business partners in a farming operation are able to collect equally on the Social Security tax that was paid in as a result of that business;
- Congress changing the eligibility requirements for individuals who haven’t worked off the farm long enough to qualify for benefits.

### **RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

All societies need to retain a connection to food, the land, and agriculture. Research and education involving farm and food issues should be carried out in the public interest and for the common good.

- Support increased funding for research, education and development of unbiased information that under girds family farming, organic and sustainable agricultural methods;
- Increase research that protects a family farm/sustainable system of agriculture;
- Support intellectual property rights, paid for by taxpayer monies, remaining in the public domain;
- Strengthen consumer education regarding nutrition, food security, and issues impacting independent family farmers and ranchers and its relevance to consumer health and safety;
- Encourage public participation in the development of university research goals;
- Support development of agriculture curricula at all educational levels that build and support family farming and sustainable agriculture methods;

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- Support nutrition education that focuses on sustainability and community development;
- Support practices and policies that reduce and eliminate pesticides found on pollen used by honeybees;
- Support further research into those issues challenging bee populations such as colony collapse syndrome;
- Support a reformation of public education systems, including university extension, to serve the needs of local people and their communities

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

We support a comprehensive rural development policy, including:

- Educational institutions providing courses that promote entrepreneurship, rural communities and retention of young adults in rural areas
- Support strong relationships between local producers and consumers
- Support state and local government enactment of bond financed agricultural loans for Young and Beginning Farmers as allowed under federal law;
- Promote a “Farm Link” program to join beginning farmers with established farmers;
- Support development of social and political infrastructures that will allow the targeting of agriculture policies, programs, and benefits necessary to encourage the entrance of young people into family farming;
- Support any effort to assist and encourage rural entrepreneurship by youth;
- Support the creation of a state farm-to-cafeteria program that includes opportunity and funding for Missouri schools, hospitals, institutions and small businesses to purchase from community-based Missouri producers;
- Support law enforcement and prevention agencies in halting illegal drug production and trafficking in rural Missouri;
- Support legalization of medical marijuana;
- Support providing state and federal assistance and resources to Missouri family farmers and rural communities to compensate for damages incurred by drug trafficking and/or the law enforcement activity designed to counter it, and to implement prevention, treatment, and educational programs;
- Oppose taking private property by eminent domain for, or by, private entities or private development;
- Require legal search warrants and official law enforcement representation before any corporate investigation of farm fields and/or animal facilities.
- Support nonpartisan redistricting processes and the establishment of redistricting commissions by states
- Oppose sitting legislators drawing district lines and gerrymandering of voting districts
- Promote creating districts based on standardized population and common geographic location

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- Support a federal transportation policy that fosters a well-maintained competitive national transportation network comprised of an integrated system of railways, waterways, and roads, and that takes action to avoid transportation shortage for transporting grain, livestock and other perishable commodities

### **NEXT GENERATION FARMERS**

The future of agriculture is in creating interest in agriculture, inspiring farming as a profession, supporting new farmers, and integrating them into the decisions made effecting agriculture.

- Support new and young farmers serving on agricultural advisory boards and thereby provide input on, and guidance for reviewing, existing and future county, state and federal agricultural programs
- Support incorporating new and young farmers into all types of farming systems, geographic locations, and farm products

### **TRADE**

We believe all international trade agreements should be based on principles of fair trade. Future trade agreements should not be encouraged until issues of past agreements that have resulted in adverse impacts for Missouri family farmers are resolved. It is crucial to fair trade negotiations that imported products adhere to standards found in the U.S. with respect to worker safety, environmental protection, consumer safety and public liability.

- Support fair trade agreements that address currency manipulation and appropriate health, labor, environmental and safety standards;
- Exempt U.S. agriculture from WTO trade sanctions;
- Orient trade policy to the domestic producer;
- Establish the needs of the U.S. family farmer and rancher as a priority issue;
- Utilize agricultural exports to enhance family farmer and rancher price and income.
- Oppose Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) evaluation for the regionalization of Brazil that would allow exempting specific locations from quarantine within a country known to harbor livestock disease.
- Oppose Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership, Trade Promotion Authority (Fast Track), and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

### **U.S. Border Safeguards to Domestic Livestock Health and Safety**

We support:

- Allowing only beef from animals under 30 months of age to enter from any nation where a case of BSE has been confirmed;
- USDA maintaining the health and integrity of the US livestock industry by promoting policy that protects US borders from penetration by foreign and contagious diseases;
- USDA advocate for US livestock producers and not the international marketplace;

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- USDA issuing directives that protect the integrity of the US livestock industry and the sovereignty of the United States border.

### **NEW SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS**

#### CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION.

Whereas agriculture's role should be promoted on conservation, natural resource management, and the like, be it hereby resolved that clean air initiatives should include offsets for agriculture such as carbon sequestration, no-till, timberland, methane capture, and other proven methods of storing carbon from the atmosphere, including gradual replacement of coal fired electrical generation with renewable resources such as wind, solar, and biomass

#### FARMLAND PROTECTION.

Whereas farmland acreage for food production is and has been in decline due to increased urbanization and whereas that urbanization has created greater interest in and control of farmland by the wealthy and multi-national corporations be it hereby resolved that state concessions to land ownership by foreign entities and corporations are misguided and detrimental to family farming in Missouri.

#### PROMOTE TRANSPARENT SAFEGUARDS.

Whereas eating is a moral act and whereas consolidated corporate food production can result in long term animal and contract farmer abuse through the pursuit of short term monetary gain by corporations be it hereby resolved that Ag Gag laws encourage abusive behavior detrimental to family farms and a wholesome food supply, and should not be allowed.

#### ENSURE CLEAN WATER AND AIR.

Whereas clean water and air are important to a healthy population and healthful food production, be it hereby resolved that clean water and air rules are important to family farms and all citizens of Missouri and should be implemented in ways that both protect and benefit citizens and family farmers.

#### PROVIDE HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICE TO RURAL MISSOURI.

Whereas access to the World Wide Web is crucial to businesses and farming around the world and whereas Missouri family farmers have an unprecedented opportunity to grow consumer direct markets for food and produce be it hereby resolved that federal and state government should encourage development through tax incentives and grants by Missouri RECs, telephone cooperatives, and farm cooperatives, of hard wired and wireless internet access across all of rural Missouri.

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE PARTNERSHIPS (TPP).

## MFU 2017 Policy

Whereas the TPP and T-TIP trade deals would have wide-ranging implications for agriculture, agricultural workers, and consumers of food products, be it hereby resolved that transparency in international agreements, inclusion of workers and consumers in the planning and decision-making processes, safeguards for the quality of products and for the environment, protection of American jobs, workers and consumers around the world, should be the hallmarks of the US position.

## NATIONAL CONVENTION VOTING PROTOCOL

Whereas decisions made by delegates at national conventions are to represent the preferences of the membership in their states, the voting process should be executed in a manner that insures membership approval. Challenging decisions made at national conventions should be allowed as a point of order, thus providing a mechanism to preserve the use of a weighted vote only for the most important issues. Further, a weighted vote should require a minimum of 5 states support before use.

## AG POLICY 2018 FARM BILL

Whereas the Agriculture Risk Coverage Program currently has a choice between a county or individual policy which has resulted in confusion, be it hereby resolved that the program should be changed to one policy.

Among issues informing the 2018 Farm Bill Debate, the following three issues deserve further analysis;

- 1) Rapidly changing technologies favor larger scale participants,
- 2) Insurance as actuarial based programs are inherently scale neutral, and
- 3) Supply chain contracting occurs with decreased system transparency and loss of markets viability.

These areas have relevance to agricultural systems' present and future structure.

## TRANSPARANCY FOR CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR FEDERAL OFFICE

Whereas some candidates for federal office fail to release their federal tax information, be it hereby resolved that new legislation is needed requiring all candidates for federal office to release their federal tax information.

## WATERS OF THE US

Whereas clean water and air are essential to all people wherever they are, and whereas geography and climate vary among states, and whereas climate and soil diversity may create very different situations among farms in different states, and whereas clean water and air is essential to all people wherever they are, and whereas Waters of the US (WOTUS) rules create hardship to greater or lesser degrees in different states, and whereas litigation of EPA rules and actions has become common among special interest groups, and whereas effective regulation should never be politicized at the expense of the greater good, therefore be it resolved that the mission of Environmental Protection

## MFU 2017 Policy

Agency (EPA) is not at the discretion of the Administrator or any sitting president but is based upon the will of Congress.

## MFU 2017 Policy

**GLOSSARY**

**2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D)** - is an organic compound with the chemical formula  $C_8H_6Cl_2O_3$ . It is a systemic herbicide which selectively kills most broadleaf weeds by causing uncontrolled growth in them, but leaves most grasses such as cereals, lawn turf, and grassland relatively unaffected.

**1031 exchange** – also known as a Starker exchange or a tax-deferred exchange; permits investment property owners to sell a property and defer tax payments by reinvesting the proceeds into a “like-kind” investment property or properties. A 1031 exchange is enabled by Section 1031 in the Internal Revenue Code.

**Affordable Care Act (ACA)** – the comprehensive health care reform law enacted in March 2010.

**BSE** – bovine spongiform encephalopathy; a progressive neurological disorder of cattle that results from infection by an unusual transmissible agent called a prion

**CRP** – USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program, administered by the FSA; the long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

**Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM Act)** - an American legislative proposal for a multi-phase process for undocumented immigrants in the United States that would first grant conditional residency and upon meeting further qualifications, permanent residency.

**E85** – gasoline blend consisting of 85 percent ethanol, approved for use in newer vehicles.

**U S Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** – a federal agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services

**Genetically engineered organism (GEO)** - See genetically modified organism (GMO).

**Genetic modification (GM)** - The technique (or process) of removing, modifying or adding genes to a living organism via genetic engineering or other more traditional methods. Also referred to as gene splicing, recombinant DNA (rDNA) technology or genetic engineering.

**Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)** – A genetically modified organism (GMO) is any organism the genetics of which have been altered through the use of modern biotechnology to create a novel combination of genetic material. GMOs may be the source of genetically modified food ingredients and are also widely used in scientific research and to produce goods other than food.

## MFU 2017 Policy

**NRCS** – Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; provides America’s farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily make conservation improvements.

**Waters of the United States (WOTUS)** - rule is largely a technical document, defining which rivers, streams, lakes and marshes fall under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers.