American Farmers & Ranchers is a general farm organization, which has been representing family farmers, ranchers and rural Americans since 1905. It is the oldest and one of the largest general farm and rural organizations in Oklahoma, with members in all 77 counties.

With a broadly based farm, ranch and rural community membership, American Farmers & Ranchers is known as the “Voice of the Family Farmer and Rural America.”

The members themselves make our policy. They do this through a system of annual meetings. Local and county organizations send recommendations to the state level for policy committee review. The local and county organizations also send delegates to the annual state convention to approve our platform, which guides the organization’s actions.

This policy establishes the legislative direction of the organization and represents the diverse and complex interests of the people of rural Oklahoma. AFR/OFU strives to represent these issues in a non-partisan manner on a local, state and national level.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREAMBLE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIAL ORDERS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOPERATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL ISSUES</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIME</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFETY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SECURITY AND SENIORS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH CARE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREDIT AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOD PROCESSING</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LABOR</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. GENERAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. CROP INSURANCE/RISK MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY RIGHTS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORECLOSED LAND AND WETLANDS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENERGY</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIBAL ISSUES</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. RURAL WATER</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAXATION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. IMMIGRATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. FEDERAL</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. STATE</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. COUNTY</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. FEDERAL AGENCIES</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTILITIES</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS

PREAMBLE

We believe in this nation, under God, and for the great hope for eternal freedom, which it holds for humanity everywhere.

We re-affirm our convictions of the truth and the rightness of the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and its Bill of Rights.

We pray our state and national leaders place national security and the preservation of our form of government as their foremost responsibility.

We support prudent policy and programs that will preserve the American system of family farms. Furthermore, we encourage all commodity groups and all farmers and ranchers to cooperate in formulating solutions and promoting sustainability.

Under our economic and political system, the family farm system of agriculture is the most productive and efficient in the world. Since the nation’s beginning, family farmers and ranchers have brought forth from the soil new wealth in abundant production of food and fiber and even today agriculture remains the number one industry.

PURPOSE

The American Farmers & Ranchers’ mission is to provide effective grassroots leadership for the enhancement and protection of farmers and ranchers, so their rural communities may thrive and prosper. Guided by its educational, cooperative and legislative principles, American Farmers & Ranchers is committed to work for the advancement of the quality of life for its membership and people everywhere.

We are also committed to providing a continuing, safe and stable supply of high quality food and fiber for consumers.

We support the right of farmers and ranchers to engage in modern farming and ranching practices which shall be forever guaranteed in this state. No law shall be enacted which abridges the right of farmers and ranchers to employ agricultural technology, modern livestock production and ranching practices.

American Farmers & Ranchers makes a concerted effort to properly inform consumers, legislative leaders and members of Congress of the problems confronting farmers and ranchers.

American Farmers & Ranchers strives to make aggressive efforts at the national, state and local levels to educate farmers and the general public on the policy and issue positions of other organizations when the position will benefit family farmers, ranchers or our rural communities, and oppose those issues which would negatively impact them.

The role of the family agricultural producer must be that of leadership and stewardship in preserving our natural resources.

The farm and ranch family and its welfare, therefore, is the keystone of our policy. To ensure its continuation, we support a competitive market with fair price discovery.

These families have always been, and remain, the foremost stewards of this land. We have the responsibility to assure that this legacy, with its broad dispersion of land ownership, is passed on to our children and grandchildren.
SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS

AG SALES TAX EXEMPTION
We support the state agriculture sales tax exemption and oppose regulation that increase or cause undue burden on agricultural producers during the ag tax exemption application process.

ELECTRONIC ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION
We support a producer’s voluntary application of technology, age verification and trace back methods which can enhance producer profits. We support current non-electronic animal identification methods. We oppose any mandatory electronic animal identification requirements, whether mandated by state or federal authorities.

EDUCATION
We support the Oklahoma State Legislature continuing to address the crisis in public education funding. No public school should be funded at a lower per student rate than any charter school.

We support the creation of a statewide education task force with stakeholders including farmers, ranchers and other rural constituents in order to search for options to increase classroom funding, increase teacher pay, and identify educational reforms.

We support full-time extension educators in every county in Oklahoma.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING
We support an increase of funding in order to help retain key personnel at the OSU Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

We support the continued appropriation of matching funds by the state to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for flood control rehabilitation.

HEALTHCARE
We believe Oklahoma should make increased access to healthcare in rural areas a priority and work to preserve rural hospitals. We recommend reopening any structurally-viable rural hospitals that are currently closed.

IMMIGRATION
We support comprehensive overhaul of the federal immigration system in order to safeguard the American agriculture industry, which currently lacks a stable legal workforce.

PROPERTY TAXES
We urge the Oklahoma State Legislature to guard against changes to the current property tax system which would add to the financial burden of agricultural landowners, agribusinesses and agricultural cooperatives. We would favor creation of a way for individual communities to vote on sales tax increases for additional funding.

RIGHT TO REPAIR
We support farmers and ranchers having the right to repair their own equipment and cause to be repaired through third-party non-manufacturers. We further support access to service manuals, product guides, on-board diagnostics and other information to identify and repair machinery, parts and software.
STATE LEGISLATURE
We support increased efforts by AFR/OFU members all over the state to help provide rural issue education for newly elected state legislators.

TRADE
We understand the issues related to balancing trade with China, however we are concerned about both the short-term and long-term impact to American agriculture and believe the Administration in Washington, D.C., should be supportive of the industry until the trade issues are resolved.

PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ACT
We demand the enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act in regard to the anti-trust issues surrounding the packing segment of the beef industry in the United States.

TRUTH IN LABELING STANDARDS
We oppose the use of food product labeling that misleads consumers, including the use of “Product of USA” labeling. We demand the USDA enforce truth in labeling.
We support Congress establishing strict labeling restrictions on all lab-grown or plant-based “fake meat” and such issues being regulated by the USDA.

TRADE MITIGATION PAYMENTS
Trade mitigation payments shall not be made to multi-national corporations or foreign entities.

MANAGING FARM STRESS
We support National Farmers Union’s financial and emotional stress and crisis management efforts at both the state and national levels with other farm organizations.

COVID-19 INVESTMENT CONCERNS
Due to the financial burden of the COVID-19 pandemic, we oppose penalties for early withdrawal on investments up to a predetermined limit.

REVERSE MORTGAGES
We call upon Congress and/or federal regulatory agencies to investigate reverse mortgage lending practices and the impact the reverse mortgage industry has on consumers.

DPS LICENSING SYSTEM
We support improvements to the Department of Public Safety’s driver licensing system to encourage shorter delay times and greater efficiency in general with the implementation of REAL ID.

BROADBAND
We support greater access to high-speed broadband internet in rural Oklahoma. We support a consistent and transparent per-pole attachment fee to promote adequate broadband service to rural Oklahoma.

MINIMUM NEGOTIATION TRADE
We support the exploration of minimum negotiated cash trade as it relates to the fed cattle industry. We encourage thorough research on the implications of a national or regional mandatory minimum to the concept of true price discovery in the marketplace.
COMMENDATIONS

We commend the American people, especially first responders, frontline healthcare workers, and medical researchers, who played a part in combating the first global pandemic in more than 100 years.

We commend our AFR/OFU Farm Stress Management team members—Brent Brewer, Terrell Coffey and Rick Shelby—who act as “farm stress first responders” for fellow producers throughout Oklahoma.

We commend former Chairman of the House Ag Committee Colin Peterson (Minn.) for his years of exemplary service to the agriculture community and ag policy at large.

We commend National Farmers Union on their continued efforts to draw attention to and address the opioid addiction and farm stress crises in rural America.

We commend the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for their continued success at removing polluted streams from the EPA 303(d) list of impaired waters.

We commend law enforcement officers and other emergency personnel including military personnel and veterans for their service. We further condemn unprovoked violence against them and support speedy adjudication and appropriate punishment for such acts.

We commend each member, officer, local and county organization who participated in the AFR/OFU policy development process which led to the policy document developed and submitted to the membership for consideration and adoption.
COOPERATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS

We support partnering with groups who embrace policies that are favorable to family agriculture and are considered pro-agriculture by the members we represent.

We support farm cooperatives and urge all farmers to support such in their locals to the fullest extent.

We encourage our members to participate in specialty commodity organizations, with respect to the commodities they grow or produce.

We support continuation of the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 that limits each member of a cooperative to one vote, regardless of the amount of stock or membership capital the membership owns.

We reaffirm our support for rural electric cooperatives and urge Congress to provide ample insured and guaranteed loan funds to meet the needs of the rural electric cooperative system and its customers.

We strongly encourage the U.S. Congress to oppose electric deregulation.

The U.S. Congress and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) are steadfastly moving toward restructuring the electric utility industry. We believe Oklahoma decisions are best left to the state and that any restructuring of Oklahoma’s electric industry should embrace the following criteria:

1. Make certain we have continued universal access to electric power.

2. Make certain safeguards are in place to protect all Oklahomans from significantly increased rates and line costs from electric restructuring.

3. All classes of customers should be treated fairly.

4. Make certain rural Oklahomans gain the benefits of “competition,” while prohibiting the discriminatory aspects of “competition” that left rural Oklahomans in the dark a few decades ago.

5. Make sure revenues generated by the electric industry remain revenue-neutral to all receiving entities as much as possible.

6. Equalize the cost of distributing electric energy statewide, and

7. Make certain the environment is protected and preserved.

We urge the preference clause be continued as a means of assuring the people will benefit from the sale of electric power from the federal dams, not just a few stockholders.

We support the principle that recreation pays a share of the cost of hydropower projects.
We urge Congress, state legislators and ratemaking authorities to use their powers to protect the rights of rural cooperatives to generate their own power where they consider it best to do so.

We urge Congress to continue to recognize the right of cooperatives to serve defense and other installations in their service areas.

We oppose any effort, congressional or administrative, to weaken or dispose of our rural electric cooperatives or government-owned power-generating facilities.

We support legislation to allow water associations and rural water districts to redeem loans before a sale to outside investors.

We continue our support for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

We support the concept of cooperative wind energy projects that benefit member landowners. Such projects should remain as cooperative ventures once construction is completed without resale to other private entities.

**FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

We oppose any changes to our national anthem or Pledge of Allegiance.

We urge active involvement in the effort to preserve the fundamental moral values of our society and uphold the Biblical principles upon which our nation was founded.

We support the traditional family structure and believe that marriage is comprised of one man and one woman.

American Farmers & Ranchers does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex/gender, age, disability or veteran status.

We support programs promoting Christian life.

We oppose programs or practices promoting Satanism or witchcraft, and the recognition of such as valid religions.

We support the groups that are currently fighting to stop the spread of pornography and sales of pornographic materials in our state, along with stronger penalties for violators.

We strongly oppose television programming, electronic games and Internet sites not suited for full-family viewing.

We oppose Federal Communication Commission (FCC) rulings that liberalize the use of offensive, explicit or profane language and gestures on network television.

We support the people’s right for quality, free television.

We believe that determining whether life-sustaining procedures should be withheld or withdrawn for illness, disease, injury or extreme mental deterioration (such that there is no
reasonable expectation of recovering or regaining a meaningful quality of life) should be made
by the attending physicians and immediate members of the family.

We encourage the use of the “Advanced Directive” by everyone.

We oppose the illegal use of human body parts.

We recommend the changing of adoption laws to make it easier for U.S. citizens to adopt
babies born in the United States.

We support continuation of the Oklahoma Agricultural Mediation Program (OAMP) and
expansion of services to provide stress relief counseling for producers impacted by weather and
economic disasters.

We support guaranteed and timely funding from USDA for state Agricultural Mediation
Programs.

**EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS**

We support public education.

We strongly support leaving all agricultural education and FFA programs in
comprehensive high schools.

We strongly oppose the relocation of the Oklahoma Dept. of Career and Technology
Education headquarters from Stillwater.

We support all public education-designated revenue from ad valorem taxation remaining
in the public school system and not being used for private school funding.

We support the continued use of meat in school lunch programs.

We support adequate school security funding assistance with the help of state or federal
levels.

In order to avoid the consolidation of power, we support the continued public election of
the Oklahoma State Superintendent.

We support the state fulfilling their obligations to teachers receiving certification as
national board-certified teachers.

We support drivers training being available for all public and private school students.

We oppose attracting new business and industry with tax incentives which adversely affect
funding for education, unless “in lieu of” provisions are available for the impacted area from the
business or industry receiving incentives.

We support one credit hour of general agriculture be included as a high school graduation
requirement and a similar requirement in the curriculum at any Oklahoma land grant institution.
Driver’s license eligibility for minors should be limited to enrolled students, high school graduates or recipients of a GED.

We favor voluntary Bible reading and prayer in our public schools.

School children should begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, including the wording “under God.”

We support education of all citizens on the proper care and protocol of the flag of the United States of America.

Early childhood development should be a parental choice.

We urge our members to work to eliminate textbooks used in public schools that are anti-American, anti-God and anti-family.

We support the study of creationism as a portion of the curriculum in public schools.

We encourage the use of more volunteer workers, such as senior citizens, parents and retired business people, in the local schools.

We favor school boards and administrators having flexibility in rewarding teachers of excellence and discharging teachers with poor performance records, including those considered as certified staff.

We ask the Oklahoma Legislature to pass legislation allowing local school districts to vote by super majority an incentive millage of up to five mills for the betterment of education within the school district, and that these monies be non-chargeable against existing or further school aid formulas.

When local schools are required to provide foreign language, we propose it be state or federally funded.

We support exercising all influence possible to avoid the use of false or misleading textbooks on animal rights and/or environmental issues.

We support broad-based representation on the state textbook committee by a diverse group of stakeholders.

We recognize the need for a closer active relationship between AFR/OFU and early childhood agricultural education in Oklahoma. We endorse the Ag In The Classroom project as a way to reach those students. We support building a relationship with Ag In The Classroom and promoting their services throughout our programming across the state.

We support teaching animal welfare, as opposed to animal rights, through the “Ag in the Classroom” program and other agricultural advocacy training.

We support educational instruction for children on nutritional values of food and balanced meal selections and further encourage connecting children with where their food is grown.
The restrictions on daycare centers for preschoolers should not be so rigid that they prevent neighbors and/or relatives cooperatively caring for children or the rights of parents to choose daycare services.

We support Congress designating English as the official language of the United States and the Oklahoma Legislature designating English as our state language.

We oppose distribution of contraceptives and abortion referrals in school health programs.

We believe the choice of AIDS education curriculum and materials should be controlled by local school officials.

Any mandated programs beyond the basics in the Oklahoma public schools should be fully funded by the Oklahoma Legislature.

Rural areas of school districts should be adequately represented on all boards of education.

The State of Oklahoma must continue to expand its educational assistance to farmers who are in financial difficulty and/or trying to establish a new career.

We support the Oklahoma Agricultural Leadership Program (OALP) and annual line-item funding by the Oklahoma Legislature which is combined with private sector funding.

We respectfully request that the Oklahoma Legislature move very cautiously in funding, making sure that all funding is “fair” to rural, as well as urban school districts.

We oppose consolidation of schools, forced or otherwise, dependent and independent, by whatever means to meet arbitrary standards. Any assessments relative to consolidation should be an equitable comparison of all relevant factors. We support voluntary consolidation and/or innovative classroom approaches, providing incentives for such consolidations come from new money.

We oppose consolidation of schools solely based on student enrollment.

We oppose mandated consolidation of administration.

We support patrons’ right to vote to annex or consolidate with another school district voluntarily.

We support cooperative initiatives by small schools to improve efficiencies.

Small rural schools should be provided telecommunication service and cooperative programs developed to provide a curriculum that meets the requirements for high school graduation and college entrance.

We suggest our county organizations and/or members consider assisting local school districts in purchasing distance learning equipment.

We support state-approved core curriculum in all private schools.
We support allowing schools to be given credit for average daily attendance of students participating in virtual learning. However, we support the number of credits counting towards graduation requirements from online instruction be totally at the discretion of the local school board. We recognize the value of online learning for schools which may not be able to provide certain advanced subjects.

We oppose tax credits and/or vouchers for transfer between public and/or private schools.

We oppose state funding being sent to virtual charter schools.

We support Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum and programs in public schools.

We support the Oklahoma career and technical education system as one of the best in this nation for training, re-training and future employment of our youth and adults.

We support additional recruitment efforts to maintain an available pool of agriculture education instructors to meet the demand resulting from anticipated retirements in future years.

We support the work of, and adequate funding for, the 4-H, FFA, FCCLA and AFR/OFU youth programs. We will, therefore, actively oppose any attempt to curtail the activities of these deserving groups.

We encourage including, as an academic requirement, entrepreneurial training for high school students, such as the skills training demonstrated in agriculture education/FFA and career and technical education programs and 4-H Clubs.

We support the adequate funding of higher education institutions.

We oppose discrimination against career and technical education toward meeting requirements of high school graduation and college entrance.

We strongly encourage a minimum of two appointees made by the Governor to the Oklahoma Career and Technology Education Board have an agricultural background and/or career and technical education programs background.

We support the Oklahoma Legislature fully funding mandated increases in teachers’ salaries or other educational expenditures for the duration of the increase.

We support adequate funding for research and development through land grant colleges and universities.

We support following the constitutional requirement and state statute that a majority of the members appointed by the Governor to the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges shall be farmers who are actually engaged in farming and/or livestock growing as their principal business or occupation in earning a livelihood.

We oppose any new legislative or State Department of Education mandates without full funding for such mandates.

We support a legislative review of the process and fees involved in public school bonds.
CRIME

We support the victim’s rights to be strongly protected by law at the local, state or federal level.

We favor expediting the appeal process of convicted criminals.

We recommend severe penalties and strict enforcement of laws governing all drivers, including juveniles under the influence of alcohol and drugs. We also recommend mandatory incarceration of transporters of illegal drugs, pending trial.

We support changes in the juvenile justice system to provide adequate juvenile detention facilities with adequate counseling and rehabilitation programs.

We support peaceful communities and the right to peacefully assemble. Those that breach legal standards should be appropriately punished.

We call for greater emphasis on controlling alcohol and drug use.

School officials and law enforcement officers in schools must be given adequate latitude to address disciplinary problems in schools.

We encourage random drug testing of anyone responsible for the safety of others and support the crack-down on any abusive use of drugs, illegal or prescription.

We encourage adequate funds be appropriated for the treatment and incarceration of drug users.

We support the county’s option to regulate the sale of liquor.

We support the Amber and Silver Alert System.

We support the establishment of a rural crime unit. We prefer that such a unit be under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) in cooperation with the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) where applicable.

We oppose attempts to consolidate civilian surveillance and intelligence, such as the OSBI and the FBI, under military control.

We support the action of local, state and federal departments and agencies to combat terrorism, including any agrarian-related terrorism attack.

Due to the threat posed by terrorists to the security and welfare of the United States, we support the actions taken through the Dept. of Homeland Security to require foreign students in the U.S. on student visas to show proof of enrollment and academic participation.

We support increasing penalties for acts of agricultural terrorism.

We urge support for local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.
We support additional efforts to protect our federal borders from the growing and/or import of illegal drugs and potential terrorist activity.

We support the use of trained dogs for drug detection.

We recommend that current laws be rewritten and strengthened concerning child abuse and sexual crimes against children so that children will be better protected. We favor providing law enforcement agencies with the resources needed to apprehend, prosecute and monitor sex offenders.

Parents and minors should be held legally and financially responsible for all costs and damages incurred by a minor’s criminal activities.

We urge our members to join and/or organize their communities into neighborhood watch-type programs and cooperate with local law enforcement agencies for identification of all personal property.

After an accident involving property damage to fences, buildings or equipment, the investigating law enforcement officer(s) should be required to notify landowners or tenants of such damage immediately after it occurs.

The DOC should pay the county jails of Oklahoma at a rate commensurate with state incarceration costs for state offenders after judicial sentences are imposed.

We believe the state should bear some responsibility in assisting with the operation of county jails.

We recommend uniform and prompt sentencing for the same type of offenses and mandatory minimum sentences be provided by law for repeat offenders.

Hardened criminals should be segregated from first time offenders and efforts should be made to rehabilitate first time offenders.

We support legislation that would limit early release of prison inmates to those convicted of non-violent crimes only.

We favor work programs whereby inmate labor would be used to maintain and improve public facilities, such as roads, bridges, parks, buildings and other such public property.

More consideration should be given to restitution, rather than confinement, when the risk to the public is minimal.

We encourage use of electronic monitoring, rather than incarceration, for non-violent offenders.

More emphasis should be placed on the supervision of parolees.

A jail meeting standards when built should not be in violation when new regulations or standards are issued, unless the total cost of updating is provided by the state or federal government.
To help alleviate the ever-increasing tax burden on rural residents, we support a concept of regional, centrally-located jails, funded by the state, to serve multiple cities, towns and counties, but only when these entities and the voters wish to participate jointly.

We support adequate funding for multiple-county rural crime task forces.

We support action to prevent or minimize frivolous lawsuits.

We oppose firearms registration or any other invasion or limitation of our Second Amendment rights.

We support protecting one’s self and family with necessary force, particularly when a perpetrator intrudes upon their property.

We favor a rehabilitation center for minor juvenile offenders and an alternative school environment for repeat offenders who constantly disrupt the classroom and cause problems.

We support coordination of local, state and federal governments in prosecution of crimes committed with electronic media.

We support adequate funding for ODAFF for investigating theft of livestock and other agriculture commodities, products, and increased penalties for perpetrators.

We oppose the recreational use of marijuana.

SAFETY

We encourage additional annual funding allocations for volunteer fire departments to build adequate local firefighting capacity. We oppose insurance companies/agents being the source point of collections for fire department assessments.

We support county officials’ authority to declare a burn ban during times of high fire risks and support the enforcement thereof.

We support public funding and installation of dry fire hydrants.

We support education and training efforts related to farm operations, grain storage, farm machinery and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety.

We support a statewide coordinated communications network system and an enhanced 9-1-1 system which would improve the efficiency of ambulance and emergency medical services in rural areas.

We urge the state not to over-regulate rural fire departments.

We support special protection and precaution for firemen and first responders fighting fires at medical marijuana facilities.
SOCIAL SECURITY AND SENIORS

We support a strong Social Security system.

We oppose any negative net adjustments of the current Social Security system and support adequate continued federal funding of the Social Security program.

We support the federal government investing Social Security funds in U.S. Treasury bills.

The spouse or family of a deceased person should be able to keep the month’s social security check in the month that the individual became deceased.

We believe only U.S. citizens should be eligible to receive Social Security benefits, but non-citizens lawfully working with a visa or work permit should be required to pay into the Social Security system.

We oppose any cuts in Social Security benefits and furthermore urge an increase of the death benefit to the beneficiary.

We support the Older Americans Act. We commend the efforts of senior service programs, which serve senior citizens in Oklahoma, and further, we urge funding these programs, continuance and expansion into all counties in our state.

We support closer monitoring of benefits for social security disability.

HEALTH CARE

We support continuation of an Oklahoma State University (OSU) teaching hospital and associated osteopathic doctor training which primarily returns physicians to rural Oklahoma.

We support providing a wide range of services to our veterans, including adequate health care in a timely manner, with close scrutiny and continued oversight of U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs by the federal government.

We support veterans receiving healthcare at their local hospital if the care they need exists in that location.

We support health care reform that does not disproportionately burden small, family-owned farms and businesses with additional costs.

We support health care reform to cover all Americans with affordable and available basic health-care coverage.

We support affordable prescription drugs for senior citizens.

We encourage the federal government to simplify the information on and enrollment of Medicare Part D and provide more affordable coverage without gaps.
We support the right to enroll in Medicare Part D at any given time after the age of 65 without penalty.

We oppose funding reductions to Medicare, but support a process for establishing a means test for program eligibility.

We support expanding qualifications to allow more people eligibility for the medical savings plan, including employees with no health plan benefits.

We encourage the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to continue their efforts to expand the education and training provided by regional hospitals to encompass the entire state and provide care at low cost to indigent patients as well as to train interns in rural areas.

We support providing equal pay for equal services claims reimbursement, whether in a city or rural health care facility.

We oppose changes in regulations which would impose unrealistic demands on rural hospitals and rural physicians, threatening survival of small hospitals and discouraging physicians from establishing or maintaining rural practices.

We support incentive programs that encourage young doctors to practice in rural areas upon completion of their training.

Training for emergency medical technicians should be fostered in regional areas utilizing local volunteer fire departments, hospitals, Oklahoma Career and Technology Education centers and other entities utilizing grant funds to accomplish the effort.

We support legislation to allow 100 percent federal and state income tax credits or tax deductions for those who self-finance their health insurance and are self-employed.

We support keeping medical marijuana separate from recreational marijuana.

**TRANSPORTATION**

We favor the close monitoring of the proposed border-to-border superhighway projects.

We support the reauthorization of the federal highway fund and oppose such funding being redirected to other non-roads and non-bridges projects.

County roads and bridges should maintain a high funding priority by the Oklahoma Legislature.

We support revenue from energy production and mining be prioritized to local and county roads and bridges in the area the energy and aggregates are produced.

All motor vehicle excise tax should be earmarked for county roads, state highways and city streets, rather than going into the general revenue fund.

We oppose the use of state funds and federal gas tax monies in promoting and assisting in the construction or maintenance of toll roads.
The Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) should pay for repairing county roads used for detours when building or repairing state highways.

Access roads around lakes that have been built by the state should be maintained by the state and not by the counties.

We support new bridges being built on the original right-of-way and not off-set.

We support ODOT being responsible for maintaining their fences along limited access highways.

We encourage the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to work with property owners to find common sense solutions when disputes arise over highway signage regulations.

We favor a law requiring all road intersections and right-of-ways be cleared of weeds and brush to prevent accidents. We support the baling of right-of-ways with preference to adjacent operator.

The Oklahoma Legislature and Governor should do everything possible to maintain railroad services and all existing transportation facilities in all of Oklahoma.

We support legislation that would provide for adequate rail competition and oppose rate increases by railroads for agricultural products.

We support full-contract rate disclosure, including all pertinent contract provisions.

We support the state assisting in railroad right-of-way purchases and maintenance for rail services and the enhancement, expansion and continuation of short-lines for the continued viability of the state economy.

We oppose state or federal regulation regarding the transportation of hazardous materials by farmers who do so in the course of their own farming operation.

We support an agriculture exemption from federal and state regulations regarding displaying of Dept. of Transportation (DOT) numbers.

We support the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP) in their efforts to educate farmers and ranchers on current Federal Commercial Motor Carrier Safety Administration requirements.

We support variances for natural disasters in “hours of service” regulations for drivers with CDLs with respect to restoring emergency services.

We support maintaining hours-of-service exemptions for livestock transportation.

In order to continue receiving federal transportation funds, permits for hauling loads of hay should be free and easily obtainable, since the federal government requires the State of Oklahoma to issue such permits for use on federal roads.

We oppose federal requirements to install lighting on farm equipment that was not originally equipped with such devices.
We encourage the voluntary effort of producers to put reflective tape and slow-moving vehicles symbols on farm tractors and equipment.

We encourage designating one central agency for issuing permits and enforcement of truck weights and measures.

We support reasonable reform of federal and state transportation laws regarding increasing weights and measures when transporting farm commodities and equipment.

We support counties receiving a portion of the revenue derived from fines levied at Oklahoma Department of Transportation weigh stations located within that county.

**CREDIT AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

We recognize and support the value of community banks and lending institutions to rural areas and realize that the broad-based economic stress of the nation has impacted these entities. We trust that they will not be ignored for future assistance when they are negatively impacted.

We strongly oppose legislation which negatively impacts rural America banks and lending institutions.

We oppose the Basel III proposal which fundamentally changes how all banks’ holding companies calculate their capital ratios which impacts loan volume.

Assistance to rural banks can be provided by allowing Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) tolerance in working with local bankers.

We oppose further relaxation of the branch banking laws.

We oppose the continuing increase of regulations on home mortgages lending and support relaxation of regulations relative to community lending for home mortgages.

We oppose further closure and/or consolidation of existing Oklahoma Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices, support adequate staffing commensurate with work load levels evaluated annually, and support updated technology for expediting delivery of programs.

We oppose recall of short-term FSA farm loans until termination date.

We support a two year extension on the 15-year limit on FSA loans until the issue can be reconsidered.

FSA should be more adequately funded for emergency farm ownership and operating loans.

All FSA applications and credit for farming activities should be fairly and equitably considered and acted upon in a timely manner to maintain the integrity of the program.

We oppose the privatization of FSA loan programs.
We support continuation of the limited resource loan program through FSA and oppose loan time limits as the only disqualifying factor.

FSA should accomplish its original mission with emphasis on agriculture loans and provide adequate funds for both guaranteed and direct loans return to the direct loan concept.

We support lower interest rates on agriculture loans from FSA including but not limited to socially disadvantaged and veteran programs.

We support FSA regulations, which would give delinquent FSA borrowers additional time to complete the loan servicing documents.

We support the amount of write downs on FSA loans to not be below current fair market value and to be determined by a minimum of three certified land appraisers using the comparative sales approach.

We strongly support jurisdiction of the Farm Credit System (FCS) remain under the authority of the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

We support legislation to close the exit provision of the FCS that would allow the sale, acquisition or merger to any private entity that is not a cooperative.

We support the FCS in providing long-term, low-interest-rate loans in a timely fashion to young people who want to start farming.

We support the continued cooperative ownership of the FCS and its status as a government sponsored enterprise. We support maintaining the Farm Credit Administration (FCA) as the FCS’s independent regulator and the agency’s focus on FCS safety and soundness and mission fulfillment.

The Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer MAC) could be a new source of long-term, fixed-rate credit for family farmers if properly administered. We urge Congress to review the effects of Farmer MAC on the availability of credit to borrowers whose loans would not qualify to be pooled or who would choose not to have their loan pooled.

We urge continuance of the program authorizing matching grants to states with qualified mediation programs.

We favor continuing the Agricultural Link Deposit Program as administered by the Oklahoma State Treasurer. The program should be limited to family farmers, as defined herein, and on the ability to repay. The program should be expanded by providing additional funds for lending.

We encourage Oklahoma Bankers Association members to get involved with farm organizations on issues related to the farm bill.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We support state legislation that enhances economic development in rural Oklahoma. We urge local and county AFR/OFU organizations to cooperatively work with city, county and state agencies to take advantage of economic development opportunities.

We support the continued funding of the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) program that provides the infusion of capital to assist small towns, rural communities and rural water districts.

We support the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry’s (ODAFF) Made in Oklahoma program.

We support any effort to expand, enhance or assist the “added value” industry in Oklahoma, including tax incentives for investors in value added agricultural incentives, and that they be transferable and minimize negative impacts to education.

We encourage increased funding for the Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification Program.

We encourage legislation that would establish a state program for investing and or financing rural business growth within the state.

We support American Farmers & Ranchers continuing to pursue agricultural value-added venture opportunities for our membership.

We support efforts to promote agritourism opportunities for rural Oklahomans as another means of complimenting their existing agricultural enterprises.

We support the development of hemp processing infrastructure.

FOOD PROCESSING

We support interstate or intrastate shipment of beverages and processed foods if the state inspections meet or exceed federal standards.

We support increasing the funding commensurate with the increased number of inspectors needed to adequately inspect intrastate, interstate and international food.

We support Oklahoma State University’s continued efforts to secure federal grants and encourage the Oklahoma Legislature to appropriate the necessary funding for operation of the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center (FAPC).

We support irradiation as a means of purifying food products.

We support food safety oversight for micro plastics in our food and water supplies.

LABOR
We support cities or towns of less than 25,000 population, and counties less than 60,000, be exempted from provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act. This act provides that prevailing wages be paid on any construction job where public money is involved.

We support a common sense approach to child labor regulations and laws relative to agriculture.

COMMUNICATIONS

We support a joint effort among all agriculture groups in Oklahoma to create an environment of transparency between producers and consumers, rural and urban, to maintain confidence in our products and practices.

We support agriculture advocacy initiatives and communication efforts to promote agriculture to the non-agriculture audience and to educate consumers, utilizing all available methods, including social media, podcasts and other emerging technologies.

We support federally funded access to broadband (Internet) communication in rural areas.

We strongly support legislative efforts to secure access to programming at non-discriminatory rates for home satellite dish owners in rural America. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should give consideration to rural residents to obtain local channels by dish when the mailing address conflicts with regulations which prevent them from receiving the nearest local channel.

We support preservation of satellite-based augmentation system (SBAS) guidance opportunities for agriculture and protection of investments made by producers in existing technologies.

We support an agricultural exemption from FCC registration requirements.

We support increased enforcement of the telephone solicitors no call list, for both land lines and cell phones.

INSURANCE

A. GENERAL

Market conditions and competitive pricing will lead to innovation in developing solutions to problems relating to multi-peril crop insurance and mitigation. Competitive pricing and risk-based underwriting are essential to developing and maintaining a viable disaster insurance market and should be originated and enforced at the state level.

Insurance legal liability minimum limits should be enforced and motor vehicle registration and tags pulled if they are not in compliance.

We support the removal of the drop-down liability clause on AFR auto policies.
We encourage all drivers to take a safe driving course in order to receive additional insurance policy discounts.

We support delivery of insurance services by full-time, stand-alone professionals.

We oppose mandatory workers’ compensation being extended to family-size production agricultural operations and small businesses.

We favor farmers being exempt from personal liability when using contractors and contract labor.

We oppose frivolous lawsuits. If the court finds in favor of an insured defendant, we believe the plaintiff and/or their lawyer(s) should be made responsible for defendant’s costs.

We support legislation to strengthen and amend the current tort reform law. Injured parties should be compensated only for the actual loss incurred, plus expenses of recovery.

Reasonable limits of liability exposure should be placed on corporate boards of directors for actions of the corporation made without their prior knowledge or consent.

Reasonable limits of liability exposure should be placed on state, county and municipal government.

We favor justifiable evidence of merit being presented to the court before filing a product or malpractice liability lawsuit.

We favor the establishment of certain statutes of limitations pertaining to liability lawsuits, not to exceed five years.

We favor legislation limiting liability of any individual to the extent of their contributory negligence.

The AFR Mutual Insurance Company was originally established (Oklahoma Farmers Union) to serve its rural membership. We urge that, when decisions must be made regarding reduction of insurance services, preference be given to rural, over metropolitan, insureds.

We do not discourage the use of the windmill by local/county organizations and AFR insurance agents in promotional efforts.

We support limits on liability for permitted agritourism activities.

We support the National Fire Protection Association Firewise Communities Program and associated educational initiatives to property owners. We encourage the participation of AFRMIC agents in the program which will result in reduced risks for company insureds.

We believe only AFR agents be permitted to sell a product underwritten by AFR Insurance or its subsidiaries. YCI should only be sold by AFR agents; non-AFR agent contracts for YCI should be terminated.
B. CROP INSURANCE/RISK MANAGEMENT

We support development of federal crop insurance policies providing dollar-per-acre multi-peril option similar to policies that exist for single-peril type coverage such as hail.

Multi-peril federal crop insurance programs should apply to all crops in all counties. The program should include optional coverage plans, one of which would be at least the cost of production.

Farmers should not be penalized on their crop insurance average yield as a result of natural disasters.

We encourage increased premium assistance for producers who purchase higher levels of coverage.

We support private vendors handling federal crop insurance.

We oppose mandatory federal crop insurance as a requirement for participating in price support programs.

We oppose any new restrictions on crop insurance related to livestock grazing.

We oppose any new insurance restrictions on broadcast wheat.

We encourage risk management training.

We encourage a review of current risk management regulations to complement each farm bill.

We support crop insurance premium payments being due after average harvest dates.

We support the continued availability of the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for dual-purpose crop and grazing winter crops.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Biological surveys, including the cataloging of plant and animal species, and water samples should not be conducted on private property without prior written consent from the landowner.

Micro-management of watersheds and streams and new user fees that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is implementing should not infringe on a producer’s ability to build ponds and till soils, nor impact technical assistance to these producers by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should be restricted from writing arbitrary policies and regulations that interfere with the private rights of citizens.

We are opposed to municipalities imposing land-use restrictions outside city limits.
We are opposed to the state and federal government owning, regulating or controlling billboards.

Land acquired by condemnation under the eminent domain statutes should have a settlement value of not less than 100 percent of replacement costs for like property plus intangible damages. We support mediation in eminent domain proceedings.

All necessary action should be taken to:

1. Preserve the water rights of the individual citizen and prevent further usurpation of those rights,

2. To see that legislation is initiated and supported recognizing the rights of individuals, from which water has been taken, and

3. Reaffirm, renew and defend the concepts that water rights are property rights, and these established rights to the use of water by an individual should not be taken away without the due process of law and adequate compensation.

We oppose the use of eminent domain to acquire land believed to be the habitat of endangered species. We oppose the acquisition of large tracts being acquired by private funds for the purpose of donating or selling it to a government agency at a profit.

We support governmental financial compensation for protection of endangered habitats on private land.

The threatened species designation and critical habitat determined by U.S. Dept. of the Interior agencies (i.e. USFWS) for certain species could infringe upon the property rights of agricultural producers and other landowners. The impacting agency must produce proven scientific data indicating need, an economic impact statement and a benefit to cost ratio for the action being taken before a designation determination becomes final.

All impacted public and private entities and individuals shall be compensated from the budget of the impacting agency for actual annual losses as a result of the designation. Payments shall be annualized immediately or prior to the loss.

We favor legislation that limits broad condemnation authority and in particular for private business purposes.

We oppose the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of lands for parks and recreation, and non-public utilities that are non-cooperatives.

We oppose federal legislation that would enable the federal government to acquire land outside the normal congressional appropriations process for use as outdoor recreation and historical preservation. Congress should maintain control and oversight of such programs in the interest of all citizens.

We urge clarification of federal and state statutes that would allow all railroad rights-of-way resulting from reversionary easements to revert back to the present property owner if abandoned. If the rights-of-way were purchased and then abandoned, the first right to purchase
the property should be offered to the current owner of the tract of land from which it was originally separated.

We support adequate funding for an agricultural land trust or foundation for the preservation of agriculture land use.

We support further education of property owners in setting terms relative to compensation of easements or leases of surface or subsurface property rights. We further support development of model leases relative to the activity.

We encourage the development of model contractual instruments which allow landowners to receive annual payments for compensation of damages and royalties relative to continued generation and/or transmission of energy instead of or addition to a one-time easement payment.

We support the right of surface owners to influence what occurs on their property, including the use of third party mediation, when necessary.

We support Oklahoma being a title insurance state without requiring abstracts.

When change in land use is proposed, the planning body should be required to notify, by recognized notification procedures, the owners of adjacent land.

Trespass laws should be strengthened and enforced with more extensive fines and penalties for repeat offenders and restitution for property damage should be pursued.

Farmers and members of their immediate families (whether residing at home or not) should be permitted to fish in ponds on their own lands and to hunt on those lands during regularly posted hunting seasons, without licenses subject to special requirements.

We oppose any act which mandatorily restricts grazing of livestock in pastures where running streams are located. We oppose requiring mandatory fencing of rivers, streams and ponds.

We support owners of private property not being responsible or liable for any accident or injury sustained by persons entering property without permission.

We support just compensation to farmers and ranchers who suffer economic losses as a result of any state or federal agency ruling.

We support a landowner’s right to keep and maintain a private, non-commercial dumpsite for disposal of non-toxic materials.

We support a landowner’s right to store equipment and vehicles on property used for agricultural purposes without restriction.

We support a landowner’s right to burn refuse on their land when located in rural areas in compliance with state and county regulations.

We support the development of reasonable regulations for the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), while respecting and protecting the property and privacy rights of landowners.
We support the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for research purposes.

We support reimbursement of legal costs incurred by an agricultural producer or agribusiness if they are a defendant in litigation involving their agriculture or agribusiness operation, if the litigation is found to be frivolous or a nuisance action.

We support the ability for family agriculture to voluntarily contract with integrators in order to maintain their family farm operation.

FORECLOSED LAND AND WETLANDS

We oppose arrangements between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) which allow control of foreclosed lands in FSA inventory to be transferred without public hearings or impact studies.

We oppose acquisition of land for hiking trails and habitat for endangered species through the use of easements or other restrictions placed on deeds of foreclosed land.

We support legislative action requiring federal land for sale with no more restrictions on the deeds than existed at time of foreclosure. Mineral rights on such foreclosed lands should be left intact and transferred to the new owner.

We support development of a clear, common definition of wetlands to be used consistently by all state and federal agencies. The landowner must be notified prior to the classification or re-classification of his or her property. The owner of property taken as wetlands should be fairly and reasonably compensated for any loss of use. While we oppose the taking of ANY land by governmental agencies, no takings should occur without a sight inspection of the property and full opportunity for the owner to appeal agency decision.

We propose that the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) be the lead agency in matters pertaining to wetlands.

ENERGY

We encourage greater emphasis on research and development and increased government support to reduce U.S. dependency on foreign oil.

We encourage universities and state and federal agencies to cooperate and investigate alternative processes to produce more conservation-reliable alternatives, including biofuels, ethanol, biomass, fuel cells, wind and solar power, heat transfer and other sustainable energy sources.

We support continuation for 640 acres or less unit spacing for an individual vertical or horizontal oil or gas well in Oklahoma.

We support the continuation of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) as a means of extraction of energy resources.
We urge further development in the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) and propane as alternate motor fuels.

We support the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) as drafted by Congress with the continual use of ethanol-blended gasoline and development of biodiesel. We oppose small refinery exemptions that have weakened RFS through the EPA.

We support the use of nuclear power plants as an alternative energy source and continued research and development for encapsulation methods for spent fuel.

We support the use of wind and solar as alternative energy sources and the potential landowner leasing opportunities.

We support local communities’ ability to provide primary, supplemental or back-up power utilizing all power resources available.

Oklahoma public utilities, municipalities and/or state-owned vehicles and school districts with several buses, should be encouraged to use Oklahoma natural gas, ethanol blended gasoline, bio-diesel and propane for fuel.

Coal produced in Oklahoma should be permitted to be used for the generation of electricity within the state.

We support continuing research and construction of ethanol fuel plants and oilseed extraction plants. Registration, permitting and licensing fees should be held to a minimum. We encourage streamlining the permitting process for inland energy refineries, alternative energy production, and food-grade oils.

We support research for energy alternatives appropriate to its area and environment.

We believe state and national legislation should support exploration, development and production of sustainable energy sources, including the development of alternative fuels from our natural resources.

We support anti-trust actions to increase competition among private industries involved in energy production.

We favor retaining oil and gas depletion allowances.

Intangible drilling costs should be maintained as a deductible expense, as an encouragement to potential drillers.

We favor responsible drilling and exploration for oil and gas in the United States and its territories.

In the case of fuel shortages, fuel for agriculture purposes should be given top priority after domestic heating and cooling needs have been met.

We oppose creation of federal oil and gas corporations.

We support an oil import fee on foreign produced oil.
We oppose the importation of refined petroleum products.

We support legislation requiring all oil companies operating in Oklahoma to make available to the royalty owner and the Oklahoma Tax Commission an annual audit of production of gas or oil if requested from any well.

To relieve the ad valorem burden on landowners and to support and enhance schools and local and county governments, we support the measurement and appropriate taxation of all types of energy production that leave the State of Oklahoma.

Energy and energy related companies should be jointly and severally responsible for damages to property and for incidental expenses such as transactional costs of updating abstracts.

AFR/OFU encourages protection of mineral owners with rights to participate and be involved and included in class action suits to protect their income. We oppose mineral owners having to opt into a lawsuit but rather support current law which considers the mineral owner automatically part of the class action lawsuit.

All energy and transmission lines should be clearly marked at frequent, visible locations showing current company contact information.

Legislation should be enacted which provides that all easements automatically revert to the surface owner of record and be restored no later than three years after the land ceases to be used for the original intent of the easement.

We support requiring energy producers to maintain the roads, when they cross private property to get to their lease.

We support gas balancing (proper accounting of production). Gas being gas balanced, should be balanced in million cubic feet (MMcf).

We support the required use of electronic meters and unannounced inspection of such metering devices on gas wells by Oklahoma Corporation Commission employees to ensure more accurate measurement and proper payment for all production.

Verified reports and records of production maintained and indexed by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission should be available for the general public and royalty owners or their attorneys inspection.

We propose increasing fines for inaccurate measurement and improper payment of gas and oil wells and to use the penalties to fund the monitoring program.

We oppose any effort or decision that would permit an oil company to charge the mineral owner a portion of production or transportation costs incurred in the production or sale of oil or gas.

We support a procedure to allow a current landowner to reclaim minute mineral interests. Any monies held in escrow as unclaimed mineral proceeds should also revert back to the surface owner.
We oppose any lending institution that forecloses on any land separating the minerals from surface when selling that property.

When mineral leases expire on land or when a well ceases production, the lessee should be required to clear the records.

We encourage all mineral owners participate in mineral owners’ association organizations.

We support new legislation to make forced pooling laws fair to both the mineral owner and producer. “Good faith negotiations” should be clearly defined through legislation.

We favor the Oklahoma Corporation Commission requiring that spacing be based on characteristics of the producing zone. If acreage is forced-pooled and another formation is produced, permitting smaller spacing, that acreage pool in excess of the smaller spacing should be released from the pooling order.

We urge continued monitoring of all legislation and activity on natural gas deregulation.

We urge drilling companies who are issued a drilling permit be held accountable to the government agency or agencies for properly casing and cementing the hole to safe levels and violators should have their right to operate within the State of Oklahoma terminated.

We support an Oklahoma Corporation Commission rule change requiring the removal of drilling fluids from reserve pits at the landowner’s request.

Public funds should be used as a last resort to plug all abandoned oil and gas wells that have been improperly plugged, with the abandoning company having primary liability.

We support efforts to get oil companies to use closed pit drilling systems.

We recommend that water discharge and other natural extractants, including mud and shale resulting from oil and gas drilling, not be classified as hazardous or toxic waste.

We support research to determine if there are man-made causes contributing to earthquakes.

We support research for improved methods of energy industry wastewater disposal.

**ENVIRONMENT**

We oppose the consolidation of the Oklahoma Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB).

We support a cost-share program through DEQ to assist rural Oklahomans in proper septic systems installation and updating to address water quality concerns, to existing installations.

We support research and testing of drilling mud used in soil farming prior to application in addition to other permitting required.
We oppose any increases in emissions standards for agriculture unless compliance can be achieved at no net cost to the owner.

We oppose climate change regulations until sound science conclusively determines the contributing influences. Should regulations be passed, we firmly support the inclusion of provisions that are not detrimental to agriculture.

We support fact-based research on the possible causes and effects of climate change.

We oppose the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposing and implementing climate control regulations as a back door method to achieving climate change in the absence of passage of federal legislation.

We oppose international indirect land use in calculation of carbon footprints.

We support citizens taking the lead in bringing about sound, reasonable and effective solutions to the problem of pollution and favor a cooperative and voluntary approach.

We support efforts to limit pollution and run-off in urban developments.

We oppose the classification of agricultural lands as “point sources” of pollution, unless scientifically proven.

We support agriculture producers in their efforts to establish soil and water conservation practices for producing food and fiber. However, we oppose regulatory rules by EPA or DEQ dealing with non-point water quality and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) that unduly burdens agriculture and is not scientifically proven.

We support only scientifically based water quality standards in streams or water bodies listed on EPA’s 303(d) list in determining the need for a TMDL. In addition, we favor sufficient funding for a 90 percent cost-share for best management practice implementation must be in place before any regulatory TMDL is implemented.

We believe a landowner who has been issued a resource conservation management plan by the environmental agency with jurisdiction over non-source pollution shall be considered in compliance with the law and not polluting.

We oppose rules by EPA dealing with air particulate matter regulation regarding production agriculture. We favor exemption for production agriculture.

We oppose any EPA policy directive, which would mandate the testing and/or certification of farmland, unless a federal fund is established to pay necessary costs of meeting certification requirements.

We recommend that agriculture no longer be regulated by the EPA, but solely regulated by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA).

We support an amendment to the EPA’s authority requiring that scientific proof be provided that a situation detrimental to the public's health exists prior to exercising its administrative authority, unless deemed by local, state or national governing bodies as an emergency.
We encourage using licensed or trained individuals to do repair on air conditioning units for machinery and vehicles used in normal operation of a farming business.

We support exemption of on-farm fuel tanks from EPA and state agency regulation.

Counties that adopt a “green box” program should ensure that the sites are maintained and that they do not create a public nuisance to adjoining landowners.

We urge the Oklahoma Legislature to appropriate funds for a state solid waste disposal program administered by each county.

We support permits being issued for any dump or landfill only if located a reasonable distance from a public school or flood plain.

We strongly believe it is in the nation’s best interest to have a partnership of federal and state governments vested with the authority to make and carry out regulations concerning the use of any agricultural pesticides and/or herbicides.

We support the Oklahoma beautification program for planting flowers, trees and shrubs and urge our members, local and county organizations to participate in the program.

We favor enforcing existing laws and penalties on littering and illegal dumping on the highway and county roads and private property.

We are in favor of continued environmental monitoring on industrial and municipal waste disposal sites.

We strongly encourage DEQ to regulate state waste transported into the state in the same way that intrastate waste is regulated.

We support a fee structure for imported waste that is at minimum equal to the exporting state.

We oppose the split flow of Fayetteville, Ark., sewage into the scenic Illinois River.

We support prohibiting any person, firm or corporation from polluting the land, ponds, lakes or streams and that those in violation restore the polluted area to original condition and be subject to punishment by appropriate fines.

We strongly support the efforts of the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB) to clean up abandoned well sites, unused equipment and non-producing wells upon request of the landowner.

We support restoration of land to the original condition at the request of landowners following any oil, gas, mineral, aggregate or electricity production and/or transmission activity.

We support funding for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission to expand abandoned mine land reclamation activities to more types of mines and a broader geographic area of the state.
We support matters of mineral litigation to be considered in the local court system rather than the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

We propose that just compensation be given to those individuals whose homes have been damaged or made unlivable by commercial entities.

We propose applicants for construction of future commercial waste disposal sites should notify every surface owner within one mile of the proposed disposal site and such permit application notice should be run three times in the newspaper located closest to such sites.

When the location of an industrial waste disposal site is considered, the adverse financial impact on the surrounding property must be considered. We oppose waste disposal wells, including those for commercial salt water or toxic chemical disposal sites, being permitted on land which overlays a major source of fresh water.

We favor a law that would make any person or company found guilty of dumping salt water on public and private lands subject to a minimum fine of $2,500, with a right for citizens’ damage suits, except in state roadbed construction when covered by asphalt or pavement.

A family-owned and operated confined animal and/or poultry farm should be subjected to only those anti-pollution laws enforced by the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF). State law and ODAFF rules on confined animal and poultry operations should not be more restrictive than federal law, rules and regulations. We encourage reasonable, yet effective, standards for protection of underground and surface water from confined animal and poultry operations. We support ODAFF maintaining the delegated authority for the EPA National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). We support state funding for this delegated authority.

We support incidental grazing of conservation buffer strips.

We favor protecting landowners who purchased their property after conducting an environmental audit which found no contamination from liability from contamination later discovered.

We support a mandatory refundable deposit placed on any recyclable beverage container.

We encourage recycling programs and biodegradable packaging.

We support recycling efforts for plastic and aluminum in rural areas.

We support adding agriculture tires to the state recycling program on a voluntary basis.

We support cost-share programs that encourage transporting poultry litter away from nutrient-limited watersheds.

TRIBAL ISSUES

While we acknowledge tribal sovereignty, we encourage tribes and state and local government entities to cooperate on economic development and agriculture issues.
We support intergovernmental collaboration between local, state, federal and tribal agencies to establish practical air and water quality standards.

We support the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses by tribal governments from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to issue to tribal members.

We support tribal governments investing in agricultural enterprises as a sustainable economic endeavor.

WATER

Water quality tests mandated by state or federal agencies should be paid for by the agency requiring such test.

We support the minimum flow of water should be allowed at all times from federal dams, with notice given to news media in the area affected when an excessive amount of water is to be released. The minimum flow should be based on the average flow of water in the streams before the dam was built.

We ask that Congress define “navigable water” to mean waters that can be reasonably navigated for the movement of goods including agricultural products.

We oppose the deletion of the word “navigable” waters from the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) which expands the taking of private property and provides additional intrusiveness.

Currently a set gross production tax funding amount is dedicated to a water Rural Economic Assistance Program (REAP) and is divided equally between the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB), the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Dept. for water related initiatives. We strongly support the continuation of this effort and lifting the cap on this fund and making it a permanent dedicated revenue source.

State water quality statutes affecting agricultural water use should be administered and enforced by the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF).

We support transparency and the application of the open meetings law with respect to negotiations by the Governor, his/her designee and/or OWRB with other states, tribes, municipalities, authorities and/or individuals for the sale or transfer of ownership of Oklahoma water from the originating basin of origin.

We support the water rights of long-term water users being protected from having their water depleted or polluted.

We support developing and continuing local, regional comprehensive state water plans on a local, state and regional basis, and continuing regional representation on the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

We support mineral and groundwater rights remaining with the surface rights unless otherwise specified and noted.
We support a complete ban on fresh underground water being used or sold for use by the permit holder of water rights for secondary oil recovery.

We support reclaiming water utilized in energy development for reuse instead of using fresh water.

To preserve our fresh water resources, we encourage research and development of filtration processes to utilize non-fresh water resources to be utilized in energy exploration and development.

We urge drilling companies, who are issued a drilling permit, be held accountable to the government agency or agencies for properly casing and cementing the hole to safe levels to prevent any possibility of contamination of drinking water. If the drilling company is found in violation, the proper government agency should be responsible for terminating their right to operate within the State of Oklahoma or drilling wells in the State of Oklahoma.

The people in the area of a reservoir should have first priority concerning the use of the water or revenue from that water.

We believe that the regional watershed from which water may be utilized or transferred and/or sold should receive at least a reasonable portion of any economic benefit from the sale or transfer of water out of or within the borders of the watershed through a pre-established trust fund.

“Excess water” should be clearly defined by the OWRB.

We support all conservation techniques in the State of Oklahoma.

We support continued studies on underground aquifer water storage, recharge and recovery.

We oppose the sale of Oklahoma water out-of-state without meeting the needs of the state and local area and encourage federally recognized Indian tribes to do likewise.

We support adequate time being allowed for public scrutiny on all compacts dealing with public interest, including, but not limited to, water issues.

We believe any sale of water across the state boundaries should be voted on by the citizens within the counties in the watershed from which water will be taken.

We encourage a fair and equitable assessment and not a flat fee assessment relative to annual renewals of water usage.

We support agricultural use of water from Altus-Lugert Lake.

If a comprehensive water plan passed by the Legislature includes monitoring of wells, we support public funding for the cost of such activity.

We support Congressional action mandating the implementation of conservation practices of municipal water consumption prior to draw-down from U.S. Army Corps of Engineer reservoirs.
We oppose any legislation that establishes a minimum instream flow that restricts landowners’ agricultural and personal use.

A. RURAL WATER

We support the Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA) in their efforts to restrict encroachment from municipal water districts into rural water districts.

Construction of rural water and sewer systems should be expanded and more federal and state grant money should be made available for the program, proportionate to that being used by cities and municipalities.

Rural water systems should provide for future growth and the first years of repayment schedule should be at a reduced rate.

We support programs to provide water for rural water districts, and municipal or industrial use in rural areas, provided the water rights of local landowners are protected.

We oppose any restriction on farmers and ranchers drilling their own water wells.

We support the concept of “dry fire hydrants” in rural areas and the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to allow appropriate fire credits.

We support state grant funds for added fire protection through rural water districts.

We oppose any new rules from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that add to the list of contaminants and that decrease the acceptable levels of contaminants that municipalities and rural water districts must test for, unless backed by sound science.

We encourage county water districts and municipalities cooperation in servicing customers in annexed areas.

We support state funding for improvements to the infrastructure of rural water systems across Oklahoma.

TAXATION

Oklahoma lands acquired by the state or federal government, municipalities or by non-profit organizations, including commercial real property and farm and ranch land owned by religious institutions, should be subject to ad valorem tax, except worship centers and parsonages should remain exempt.

We believe all fuel tax revenues should be directed to the original intended purpose of improving highways, roads and bridges.

We oppose any fuel tax increase that would be used to offset a budget deficit.

We oppose any fuel tax increases that are not part of a broad-based revenue package that attempts to equally tax all sectors of the state.
We recommend legislation allowing farmers to use funds from the sale of their family farm to create a retirement fund similar to a 401K or Keogh plan. Taxes would be paid on income as it is withdrawn, rather than on a lump sum as a capital gain tax.

We support maintaining the current capital gains tax at 15 percent or less.

We support harmonizing state laws on combine entry from one state to another.

We support harmonizing and reciprocating Oklahoma state law with other states’ farm tax exemptions.

We oppose taxes being levied on stored grain.

We oppose the imposition of any additional and/or movement of the federal motor fuel tax to achieve budget deficit reduction.

We support the collection of road use fuel taxes at the terminal point.

Capital gains (now taxable income) must be eliminated for farmers and ranchers on “write-down” portion of their loans when they restructure their loans through voluntary conveyances to stay in business.

We support the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Chapter 12 bankruptcy reorganization for farmers however the IRC must be amended to create separate tax status for the Chapter 12 estate.

We support state tax provisions favorable to producers forced to liquidate livestock and which will not conflict with federal tax provisions.

We support the current federal tax provisions granted by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for producers forced to liquidate livestock.

We support allowing a tax deduction for farmers for hay and grain donated to disaster areas. This deduction should be extended to food commodities donated to hungry and needy people.

We support tax incentives or tax credits for producers who purchase or have purchased equipment to convert from conventional till farming to no-till or minimum till for controlling wind erosion and water conservation.

We support providing tax credit incentives to retiring farmers who sell their agriculture operations to a young farmer to further encourage new operators to enter production agriculture.

We oppose the federal sales tax called “value added tax.”

Whenever land is purchased under the threat of eminent domain, capital gains taxes should not be required.

We oppose interest rates being imputed by the IRS to individuals who sell their property and provide financing at a rate lower than the rate being charged by financial institutions. The
IRS should not be permitted to charge that individual the difference between the lower rate being charged and the going rate being charged by financial institutions.

We support a more strict definition of IRC Sec. 1031 land exchanges limiting non-taxable events to the current use of both properties and the intended use for the next five years.

We favor taxing the money earned in the United States by any citizen of another country.

We favor increasing the state income tax exemption to match the federal amount.

We support a constitutional amendment providing additional millage for county governments, subject to 60 percent approval by voters of individual counties.

We oppose replacing state income tax with increased property taxes and/or taxes on services.

For state revenue development we support fair and equitable treatment of all resources.

We support taxing aggregate materials when they are removed from the county where they were mined.

In the absence of total elimination, we recommend a federal estate tax exemption be set at $11 million and indexed thereafter to inflation.

We support increasing the annual gift tax exemption level.

We strongly encourage American Farmers & Ranchers Life to educate our membership through estate planning seminars across the state.

We request that an additional person, with an agricultural background, be placed on any ad valorem task force. This person is to be appointed by the County Assessors Association and confirmed by the Oklahoma Senate.

We support property taxes being based on fair market value.

We recommend use of county soil conservation maps and surveys to tax agriculture land as to its use.

We call for an accounting to the people of Oklahoma by the Oklahoma Tax Commission and/or State Auditor of all tax revenue generated by liquor by the drink, pari-mutuel betting, Indian compacts and lottery tickets.

We ask the Oklahoma Legislature to continue the present practice of assessing agricultural land based on 75 percent of rental income, 25 percent of comparable sales, to arrive at a per point value.

We strongly support continuation of the sales tax exemption, tax credits and income tax deductions used in agriculture.

We support a state-wide, sales tax-free weekend for consumers.
We do not support an increase in ad valorem taxes as a means to solve a state revenue shortfall.

We oppose all ad valorem tax increases that do not require a super-majority vote.

The Constitution of the State of Oklahoma should be adhered to in the use of ad valorem taxes, with oversight by the Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector Office.

We oppose any attempts by oil, gas and wind power companies to exempt their production equipment from tax rolls.

We oppose the mandatory licensing of farm trailers for any purpose with the exception of commercial use.

The Oklahoma Tax Commission should notify and clarify with businesses concerning farm items that are tax exempt.

We support putting all road user taxes in a trust fund for the construction and maintenance of roads. The road user funds now going to other uses should be replaced, dollar for dollar, from the general fund.

We support the return of investment tax credit on all American-made products.

Because the collection of taxes falls within the purview of the Oklahoma Tax Commission and the IRS, we believe a farmer’s responsibility, with respect to assisting these state and federal agencies, should be limited to a single, annual reporting of wages paid to farm workers.

We oppose attempts to reduce the percentage of voters necessary to pass school bond issues from 60 percent to a majority vote.

We support special consideration be given to personnel involved in natural disaster response regarding income taxes.

We support equal taxation for all new and old, vertical and horizontal oil and gas wells and wind generation facilities in Oklahoma.

We support the Oklahoma Legislature attempting to more effectively collect sales tax on internet purchases.

We support a flat-rate tax on road-use electric vehicles in lieu of a fuel tax. This flat-rate tax should be used for the repair and improvement of roads and bridges.

We support a flat-rate tax on farm-use diesel vehicles in lieu of a fuel tax. This flat-rate tax should be used for the repair and improvement of roads and bridges.

**GOVERNMENT**

We fully support the usage of “God” on government buildings, legal documents and legal tender and we oppose the removal of existing references.
We unanimously encourage all elected officials to vote the issues rather than partisan voting.

We believe that fees or taxes collected by government for a specific purpose should be used for that intended purpose.

We support the education and enforcement of the military code for the proper care and use of the flag of the United States. Any intentional defamation or destruction of the flag should be considered a felony. We oppose protesters at all military and civilian funerals.

We support government accepting the responsibility of commitments made to military veterans.

A. IMMIGRATION

We favor immigration laws that continue to embody our creed of acceptance of immigrants, while not burdening our governments’ and citizens’ social and other resources.

We support opportunities to immigrants to earn citizenship that are willing to make a positive social, economic and patriotic contribution as U.S. citizens.

We support a documented guest worker program for immigrant laborers that results in these individuals paying taxes, obeying local, state and federal laws and have the option of returning to their home country, with full access to the judicial system.

We oppose illegal immigrant minor children, while awaiting processing, being incarcerated with convicted adult felons.

We support immigration laws that provide a system of identification, classification and taxation.

We support modernizing the H-2A visa program.

We support the development of new authorization documents that cannot be manipulated or duplicated and include biometric identifiers. Until such a system is developed we oppose employers of guest workers to be responsible for the authenticity of guest worker documentation.

B. POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES (PAC’s)

We support an opportunity to be implemented through the AFR billing process for members/policyholders to be able to make a voluntary contribution to the American Farmers & Ranchers Association Political Action Committee (PAC) to support candidates that support our policies and issues.

We oppose the use of super PACs during the election process and find their intrusion to be detrimental.

C. FEDERAL

We support the Constitution of the United States.
We strongly urge Congress to move forward on the construction and rehabilitation of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USDA-NRCS and Bureau of Reclamation lakes and reservoirs.

We support the continued partnership and collaboration between USDA-NRCS and USDA-FSA, but oppose the consolidation of their programs.

We oppose any efforts to convert U.S. land descriptions to the metric system.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and other government agencies should be held liable to pay attorney fees of both parties when the government loses the case.

We support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution requiring a balanced federal budget.

We believe the United States should not loan money to any entity of government or a foreign power for less than that it must pay to borrow the money.

We oppose approval of any additional federal holidays.

We favor legislation to require disclosure of foreign ownership and control of American real estate and business firms.

We support federal policies and programs which encourage U.S. investors to invest in America. We oppose programs such as those administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which provides monetary incentives for U.S.-based businesses to relocate in foreign countries.

We oppose the placing of U.S. troops under the command of the United Nations commanders.

We encourage reimbursement by any foreign country to the United States for assistance given. Restitution could be monetary or oil equivalency payments.

We support legislation that clearly defines “strikes” as any work action which disrupts services performed by public employees, without regard to what it might be called, such as “slow down,” “mass resignation,” “report-in-sick,” “blue flu,” “voluntary suspension,” etc. Penalties provided by law should be mandatory and not negotiable by the government entity involved.

We believe the bonus compensation used by the federal government should be used as an incentive and reward program for excellence instead of part of the salary package and the expectations of employees. Bonus compensation should be separate and apart from the regular salary.

We oppose the efforts of the state and federal government to take over any part or branch of county government.

We must have more meaningful, comprehensive campaign finance reform in the election of our state and national legislators, officials and president. We encourage further study of public campaign financing as a means of limiting the influence of large corporations, self interest groups and the wealthiest individuals.
We believe it should be illegal for non-citizens, foreign companies and/or foreign countries to provide money for candidates for offices in the United States.

We oppose granting congressional representation to the District of Columbia.

We support amending the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act so that reasonable tolerances can be established for food production; and that absolute proof must be established that food and additives will not adversely affect animal and human health by its use.

We encourage the United States Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to utilize the abundant and thorough evidence suggesting that Americans should consume a balanced diet rich in nutrients which includes lean meats and dairy products and we encourage the increased usage of Oklahoma produced agricultural commodities in all state and federal institutions.

We oppose the political appointments of “czars” in the White House which often have more political power than secretarial appointments which require more congressional scrutiny and confirmation. We believe such appointments should be sharply curtailed and require additional oversight by Congress.

We support appointed federal judges being subject to congressional review and re-confirmed periodically, every six years.

We support legislation that Congress cannot receive a salary raise to take effect during their current term of office or change their retirement status to take effect during their current term of office.

We support retaining the present U.S. Electoral College method of electing the U.S. President and Vice-President. We oppose restricting our right to vote by limiting terms of our national legislators.

We support a re-assessment of all retirement programs for county, state and federal employees and elected officials to assure that they are fair to both the employee and the taxpayer.

D. STATE

We support repeal of current term restrictions on state legislators.

We oppose any move that would encourage consolidation of power, more specifically into the office of the Governor.

We oppose the removal or transfer of inspection on any agriculture practices from the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) to any other state agency.

We support adequate funding for ODAFF, Conservation Commission, Cooperative Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station to meet staffing requirements of day to day needs and to utilize these personnel to address catastrophic occurrences. We oppose disproportionate cuts which would adversely impact all natural resource agencies.

We support legislation to simplify the probate of estates including the excessive costs of abstracting.
We oppose the Oklahoma Attorney General’s circumvention of the proper regulatory agencies relating to the investigation and litigation of potential environmental compliance.

We support the Oklahoma Ethics Commission’s efforts to affect standards of behavior which will result in more public confidence. However, to encourage public service on boards and commissions we recommend that reporting requirements be not overly intrusive.

We support the removal of the straight party voting option on election ballots in the state of Oklahoma.

We support a 60 percent favorable approval vote by citizens for the passage of all bond issues.

We oppose land use planning and zoning by counties in recognition of the need to preserve agriculture land.

We encourage ODAFF to serve as an intermediary for producers with export opportunities.

The Oklahoma Legislature should be prohibited from diverting funds from various state retirement systems to fund state government, and honor existing obligations.

We support efficiencies in all state agencies. We object to the state legislature removing money from state agency revolving funds to balance the budget; particularly, from non-appropriated state agencies whose funds are received from entities they regulate, not state tax revenue.

We oppose a state constitutional convention. Any amendments for the state constitution should be submitted to a vote of the people in the form of a single-issue state question.

With respect to ballot initiatives, we support a constitutional amendment which would provide fairness to both rural and urban constituencies and require all initiative petition signature drives achieve the requisite percent as prescribed in the constitution—in each of the congressional districts as opposed to statewide—to be deemed as having sufficient signatures to be placed on the ballot for voter consideration.

We will work to prevent and repeal excessive rules, regulations and legislation which levy rigid requirements in the name of “the public interest,” but that instead, penalize citizens or deny them needed services by such excessive regulations.

We support the enforcement of state laws concerning the displaying and removal of campaign signs.

**E. COUNTY**

County governments should be given a greater role in initiating environmental safeguards and in developing economic opportunities within their counties.

State and federal funds allocated to support county and municipal governments should not be diverted to other governmental entities or programs.
When the Oklahoma Legislature mandates additional services or expenditures by the counties, the state must provide funding.

We oppose the re-evaluation of agricultural land for tax purposes.

Property valuation should not be automatically raised the maximum 5% without due consideration of the specific property before reevaluation.

We support the present form of county government, with the current structure of eight elected officials per county.

We oppose any elected state or county position being changed to an appointed position.

We support the elimination of partisan designations for county elected officials.

We support legislation requiring proposed salaries for county officers be publicized before being finalized.

We favor intra-county district cooperative ownership and use of county road equipment.

We urge that travel expenses for official business of county officers and county commissioners be verified claims rather than paid by a set travel/expense allowance.

**F. FEDERAL AGENCIES**

We recommend that government agencies’ rules and regulations be more accountable and balanced to the best interests of the people and reviewed regularly to alleviate the negative effects on small businesses.

We support maintaining the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) within the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). We oppose any attempts to move these or any part of these programs to any other federal agency outside USDA.

We oppose efforts to fragment the USDA by shifting traditional agencies to other departments.

We support the USDA National Appeals Division as being the final decision on producer appeal cases.

**UTILITIES**

We favor a requirement that towers 50-200 feet tall be visibly identified.

We support the use of some form of identification, such as tracer wires, for underground utilities that cannot otherwise be easily located.

When utility location services are required by law, there should be a finite response time.
We favor that final authority for utility rate making remain with officials elected by the people, namely the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. But, we oppose special rate treatment by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

We oppose unjustified rate increases.

We support legislation to direct the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to regulate telephone rates for Oklahoma in such a way that intrastate rates will be no more than comparable to interstate rates.

We oppose the sale of federally-owned hydroelectric plants that serve our cooperatives and municipalities.

We support greater access to high-speed broadband internet in rural Oklahoma.

We support a consistent and transparent per-pole attachment fee to promote adequate broadband service to rural Oklahoma.

FARM POLICY

To establish a foundation for achieving our long-term goal of returning profitability to the family farm system of agriculture and economic stability to rural areas, we recommend that the following principles be incorporated within U.S. farm policy:

We oppose the use of embargoes and sanctions of agricultural goods, unless agriculture producers are properly compensated.

We encourage the development of a farm program that is simplified and economically beneficial for producers.

Farm programs and regulations should be finalized prior to the sowing/planting seasons of all crops.

Commodity program payments should be delivered to participating farmers in a timely fashion.

State and county Farm Service Agency (FSA) / Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) committees should be granted greater authority in determining county and district needs.

We support retention of the present historical formula (1910-1914 base) as a yardstick for measuring farm costs and income compared to present day.

We support the administration of farm programs through elected community and county farmer committees.

We support adequate federal participation in funding soil and water conservation programs. Land diversion programs should not discourage long-term conservation and soil building practices.
We support the school breakfast, lunch, farm–to-school and milk programs.

We support use and expansion of the Office of Food for Peace (PL 480) programs with proper oversight of food commodities distributed.

We strongly believe that all food and fiber products imported into the United States must comply with U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) quality, safety and health standards.

We support indexing of commodity target prices to reflect cost of production and a reasonable return.

Low interest loans and financial assistance should be available to family farmers and ranchers to help them establish viable farming and ranching operations.

We support the farmers’ right to update their proven yields and receive reflective farm program benefits based on proven yields in lieu of FSA program yields.

We oppose payment limitations merely based on the size of the operation.

We support future farm policy that recognizes our geographical differences and provides flexibility regardless of the agriculture operation whether crops or livestock.

We support the continuing of farm program payments to producers who graze-out their grain rather than mechanically harvest their grain.

We support continuation of federal disaster programs for livestock and crop production.

While we believe in traditional program payments, in lieu of these we support an enhancement of revenue assurance and crop insurance programs which encourages participation by producers.

We support restoration of the following items without budget baseline, and if possible to be included as part of the permanent budget baseline: Small watershed rehabilitation; grasslands reserve program; wetlands reserve program; supplemental agricultural disaster assistance; livestock indemnity payments; livestock forage disaster program; emergency assistance for livestock, honeybees and farm-raised catfish; funding of pending rural development loan and grant applications; value-added agricultural market development program grants and rural micro-entrepreneur assistance program.

We support permanent disaster authority assistance programs that provide quick and adequate compensation.

We support enhancing, improving and strengthening crop insurance programs, without further program cuts, as a risk management tool for producers.

We support continued funding of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); and capping CRP at 40 million acres and restoring the crop base after contract expiration.
We support fully funding CSP, given the additional acres included with the elimination of base acres from lands not planted in program crops being automatically enrolled.

We support establishment of a per acre payment on CRP which limits the payment to the fair rental value.

Any cropland converted to grassland with a prior established crop base will have that base protected until such time that the land is restored back to cropland use, and

In the interest of good conservation practices and not destroying residue which would encourage erosion, we support allowing producers to qualify for prevented planting for crop insurance/Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for acres in areas categorized as severe drought.

We support Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP) contracts be allowed to qualify for livestock feed assistance in times of severe drought to reduce the grazing pressure on enrolled lands which could cause erosion.

We support higher emphasis on NRCS technical and financial assistance for EQIP conversion to no-till and water conservation assistance, including pond clean-out and new construction, and support FSA additional resources through the Emergency Conservation Program for hooking up pasture taps, drilling wells, etc.

We support delivery of cost-share programs to the local level utilizing a network of conservation districts’ non-federal employees.

We support restoration of funding for technical assistance at FSA and NRCS to help effectively implement the farm bill.

We support programs which reward producers for how they farm, such as the CSP.

We support cost share programs to improve irrigation systems and other methods of water conservation.

We support restoration of authority to allow producers to extend beyond 15-year direct or guaranteed loan borrowing from FSA.

We support reducing the paperwork requirements for young farmers to comply with beginning farmer and rancher development loans and grants programs.

We support the federal government using available technology to monitor crop production around the world and report both quantity and quality to American producers in a timely manner.

We support continuation of the Farm Bill Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program in subsequent farm bills.

We support efforts to maximize the amount of dollars appropriated in the farm bill for the purpose of farm program payments to help farmers and ranchers.

We oppose concentration and vertical integration that is detrimental to the family farm and ranch operation in agriculture, with the exception of producer-owned cooperatives.
In an effort to promote homeland security and food safety, we strongly support only products “born, raised, slaughtered and processed” or “sprouted, grown, harvested and processed” in this country to be eligible to receive a U.S. label including products sold at eating establishments.

As “family farmer” is defined in this document, we support family farms and believe that program benefits, such as FSA guaranteed and direct loans, should be directed to assist the family operator.

Current county production information should be obtained from county agriculture producers for use by farmer-elected county FSA committee members.

We support programs which educate the media on the function of agriculture.

We encourage the executive branch to make available to family farmers and ranchers any funds appropriated for intended agricultural purposes by Congress.

We oppose the USDA selling government-held surplus commodity, which artificially depresses the price received by producers.

We favor storage paid farmer-owned reserves not to exceed 25 percent of production.

Individuals holding warehouse receipts or scale tickets marked for storage will have customer's priority in recovering their property when storage facilities file for bankruptcy.

Fixed land costs should be included as a cost of production in government calculations.

Land owned, leased or that receives funding from by foreign governments or persons not citizens of the United States should not be eligible for any U.S. farm policy programs.

We encourage the continued oversight of the federal school nutrition program by Congress to reduce obesity, consider the impact on local school budgets, caloric intake needs relative to student needs and participation by students.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

We support the ecosystem services market program concepts promoted by the Noble Research Institute as part of a national multisector stakeholder group charged with creating a large-scale program to finance, generate and sell ecosystem service credits from working agricultural lands through a voluntary farmer and rancher participation program.

We support utilization of cover crops in a no-till or minimum tillage system to promote soil health benefits.

All engineering work, on family farms or family owned corporation farms, mandated by the Oklahoma Feed yard Act should be performed by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) engineers within their respective districts.
Final authority over required conservation practices should be vested in the local soil conservation districts and the county Farm Service Agency (FSA) committee.

We support the continuation of a state cost-share program for soil and water conservation practices including increased funding for Eastern Red Cedar removal and invasive species control.

We support increased education on how to obtain funds for Eastern Red Cedar removal and invasive species control.

We support the established state fund for the purpose of matching federal funds and for state maintenance funds to be administered by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission to repair and maintain those watershed structures constructed by the conservation districts for the purpose of flood control within the boundaries of the state of Oklahoma. We support national efforts to provide rehabilitation funds for watershed structures.

We urge continuation of soil conservation districts and FSA programs with full authority residing in the farmer-elected county and community committees.

We support and encourage Congress to fund the small upstream flood control projects administered by NRCS.

We oppose conservation program provisions which penalize producers for early adaption of stewardship practices.

We ask that a conservation program be designed with sufficient incentive to retire marginal cropland from production.

We support and encourage the continued voluntary installation of best management practices under the Clean Water Act (CWA) as it pertains to agricultural non-point sources of pollution. Reasonable conservation compliance standards should be established by the local FSA county committee and the local conservation district board based on the unique characteristics of the soils in that county.

We oppose any and all efforts to re-direct CWA Sec. 319 funds away from the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

We support any legislative efforts to solidify the position of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission as the state agency that receives and administers CWA Sec. 319 funds.

We encourage the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation to pursue any and all action to hold the water quality work of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, local conservation districts and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) NRCS in Oklahoma as a potential model for all states to follow to address nonpoint source pollution through locally-led, voluntary, cooperative conservation instead of through regulations or lawsuits.

We support a short-term working lands soil conservation program intended to benefit wildlife, soil health and water quality while also addressing the surplus of grain.
COMPETITION AND FAIR MARKETS

We oppose non-family corporations which negatively impact production agriculture.

We support appropriate bonding requirements to ensure clean up by out-of-state and foreign limited liability companies, corporations or partnerships, when working in Oklahoma.

We support state nuisance laws which provide rural residents with immunity from nuisance claims for agricultural activities including marketing.

Only the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) should be charged with the enforcement and administration of all rules and regulations pertaining to production agriculture.

We support legislation restricting investment and ownership or leasing of land and natural resources by foreign nations and non-citizens.

We support poultry, swine and other contract growers in their efforts to enhance their bargaining and negotiating positions so they may negotiate fair and equitable contracts with corporate processors and integrators.

We discourage speculation in commodity markets.

We support farmers and ranchers having the right to repair their own equipment and cause to be repaired through third-party non-manufacturers. We further support access to service manuals, product guides, on-board diagnostics and other information to identify and repair machinery, parts and software.

We support competition among agriculture suppliers and retailers and discourage territorial monopolies. Equipment manufacturers should not prevent competition.

MARKETING OF AG COMMODITIES

We favor increased farmer-operator representation on exchange boards, specifically on those committees responsible for rule-making on agricultural commodity contracts.

We support keeping the oversight and authorization of the Commodity Futures Trade Commission (CFTC) within the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees, and believe that the CFTC should:

1. Guard against insider trading by individuals or firms which possess foreknowledge of significant price changes due to large market transactions;

2. Ensure an adequate number of delivery points for hedging participants;

3. Work in cooperation with state securities enforcement agencies to crack down on “boiler room” operations and other violations of the Commodities Exchange Act; and
4. Monitor, with special vigilance, any market movements which indicate the deliberate accumulation of excessive speculative positions, and to exercise, when necessary, those emergency powers granted by Congress.

Congress should investigate how the practice of short selling of commodities and futures manipulation by major national or international grain and livestock companies adversely affects the price farmers receive.

We oppose trading organizations accessing segregated funds.

We support sufficient bonding, federal insurance or other types of protection for persons commercially engaged in trading stocks, bonds, financial instruments, livestock or crops.

We support the continuation of agricultural weights and measures activities by the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF).

We support the establishment and implementation of a country-of-origin labeling program.

**TRADE**

To facilitate the expedient delivery of commodities relative to trade opportunities we support increased attention to maintenance of the waterways infrastructure of the United States.

We support bilateral and multi-lateral fair trade agreements, not free trade agreements, to stabilize international grain marketing and to expand agricultural exports.

We support continuing efforts to normalize trade relations with Cuba.

We support maintaining balanced trade with foreign countries and imposing tariffs on imports which disrupt domestic farm markets.

U.S. trade negotiators should consider human rights issues during negotiations on international trade.

We recognize that food and agriculture have unique characteristics that differentiate them from other sectors of the global economy. Because food is an integral part of human life, every nation should be afforded the right to establish and maintain their own domestic farm programs.

We favor appropriate action of equal value to counter lost markets caused by tariff and non-tariff trade barriers.

We support U.S. funding of the World Bank to the extent that it is beneficial to the U.S. economy.

We oppose the forgiveness of any foreign debt, whether military or economic.

We urge protection against the loss of American jobs.
We support a proposal that all foreign aid be in the form of credits to be used to buy American goods and commodities.

We oppose export of fertilizer and other materials necessary for agricultural productions when a definite need for these materials is evident in this country.

We support the initiation of tariffs to ensure a stable food supply.

We oppose importation of duty free renewable fuel.

We oppose any reduction of duties or tariffs on agricultural products imported to the United States.

Food safety legislation must include a substantial increase in the inspection of imported food and feed products. The cost of inspection should come from fees on imports. All imported food and feed products should be inspected.

To protect U.S. food safety standards and the availability of domestically-produced agricultural products, we oppose lowering any U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) standard to accommodate any foreign country’s food and fiber import products.

All beef imports should be counted under the beef import quota system and the current beef import cap should be maintained.

We oppose the importation of products from countries that do not accept the importation of U.S. agricultural products.

We favor increasing the per capita income limitation for countries eligible to receive aid under the Food for Peace Program (PL 480).

When possible all U.S. military installations, government agencies and schools should be required to use only food produced by American farmers and ranchers.

Contract sales for agriculture exports should be guaranteed.

We support exempting agriculture from trade sanctions. If embargoes or sanctions are implemented, producers should be compensated for the loss of agricultural markets.

We oppose the establishment of the “department of trade” as a cabinet office.

We support the review of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements. However, we strongly oppose any efforts to restrict agriculture trade export efforts.

We believe all participating countries of the NAFTA agreement should abide by U.S. safety standards for trucking when operating on U.S. highways.

We support agriculture organization representatives be included early in the process when considering future trade agreements, when agriculture products are involved.
We oppose the WTO and specific trade agreements having undue influence on U.S. farm policy which conflicts with the sovereignty and laws of the citizens of the United States.

We support full congressional deliberation prior to the enactment of any trade agreement.

COMMODITIES

We support research and promotion programs financed by mandatorily paid and voluntarily refundable deductions from the proceeds of sales by producers of agricultural commodities with disbursement of funds controlled solely by boards of domestic producers elected by those domestic producers assessed. The producer boards also solely control the operations of the programs.

We support producing biotech commodities for a continued efficient and abundant food and fiber supply as long as food safety is ensured, barriers are not created to interrupt trade between nations or that negatively affect export possibilities for any commodity.

We support check-off programs for imported commodities being the same as domestic commodities.

We support all weather disasters be treated equal with respect to indemnifying producers and citizens.

We support the retention of the basic agribusiness infrastructure critical to rural America which has been impacted by adverse weather conditions (i.e. grain elevators, livestock auctions and cotton gins).

In order to protect agriculture producers we support the concept of indemnity funds and being actively engaged in making certain indemnity funds are sufficient and flexible to keep up with increasing market value.

We believe the news media should utilize scientific terminology when reporting issues relevant to the agriculture industry which has the potential to impact commodity market prices to agriculture producers. For example, instead of using “swine flu,” “H1N1” should be used, or “BSE” instead of “mad cow.”

Be it resolved that all licensing entities for in-state and out-of-state custom harvesters, and for-hire transporters of agriculture commodities and products collaborate to establish a centralized permitting process.

We support research, development and commercialization of industrialized hemp for use as fiber and other byproducts.

A. WHEAT

We encourage Congress to initiate legislation to control price-depressing sales of government-owned wheat and the flood of price-depressing wheat imports.

We support inspection and compensation for producers, custom harvesters and handlers to reduce losses caused by all diseases.
No foreign materials whatsoever should be allowed to be added into wheat or feed grains for export prior to or during the loading of ships for export.

Since grain buyers levy a discount on grain below a certain quality standard, they should also pay a premium for grain that is better than standard with both discounts and premiums posted.

We support a coordinated effort among wheat producing countries to develop a genetically enhanced variety with adequate research to ensure food safety and consumer acceptance.

We encourage the U.S. Wheat Associates to become more active in addressing domestic concerns.

B. COTTON

Price support loan on cotton should be based on a domestic profitability concept, rather than a foreign cotton exchange. As long as the present price support level is based on the A-Index, we ask that it be based on a six-month marketing period.

We support continuation of the boll weevil eradication program and maintaining boll weevil-free status.

We favor keeping the cotton gins under the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

We support relaxing the Oklahoma Corporation Commission’s financial reporting requirements for cotton gins.

We support cotton gin trash research, including fuel pelleting and cattle feed.

C. LIVESTOCK

We oppose the defining of animal manure, waste or nutrients as being considered hazardous and regulated under state law or federal “Superfund” law, the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA).

We support reform and time reduction for record retention for all confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

We support clarification of the rules on the closure of lagoons of current operating facilities and for existing non-operating facilities.

We support continuing education requirements for CAFOs producers be on a basis of every third year.

We encourage the leadership of the various livestock species and general farm organizations to work together to create a USDA approved established disaster plan to help protect the future of our farmers and ranchers.

We support implementation of a livestock disaster program that compensates producers when tariffs, imports or disease affect the reduction of price.
We support keeping Livestock Assistance Program (LAP) in place and establishing a fund so the payment factor can be kept at 100 percent to insure timely payments.

We support funding a cost share program to build hay barns to increase our state hay storage capacity for times of emergency such as drought and wildfires.

We recommend enrollment in the Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences (OSU-CVHS) be expanded. Preference should be given to rural Oklahoma residents.

We support an initiative to address the shortage of state large animal practice veterinarians that focuses on financial assistance for vet school education. We additionally support a low interest loan or guaranteed loan for purchasing an existing practice or construction of a new large animal clinic in rural Oklahoma. In exchange for both considerations the veterinarian will practice a specified number of years in a rural area.

We oppose the requirement that veterinary drugs, be sold by prescription only. We support full availability of veterinary drugs to agriculture producers in order to provide adequate animal health care.

We support retaining the option of using antibiotics in medicines or feeds for animal health preventative measures or when treating livestock that are sick, with a veterinarian’s consultation.

We support the livestock owners’ personal property right to treat their own animals and/or engage veterinarians or lay people to do the same.

We support the responsible use of scientifically proven, safe production practices in livestock and poultry.

We strongly support enforcement of anti-trust laws currently on the books, and anti-trust laws must be strengthened and enforced to prevent the continued corporate dominance of agriculture markets including but not limited to livestock feeding operations.

We urge more responsible enforcement of Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Acts.

We support accurate and effective mandatory price reporting, reflective of actual prices of the major meat packers.

We support programs to educate producers on animal identification methods in order to identify and assist in retrieving stolen livestock.

We support and encourage a livestock owner’s right to identify their livestock with hot iron branding, tattooing, tagging or other types of identification.

We support the concept of a premise identification program. Any future programs dealing with animal identification should be least burdensome to producers and maintain producer confidence.

We support a producer’s voluntary application of technology, age verification and trace back methods which can enhance producer profits. We support current non-electronic animal
identification methods. We oppose any mandatory electronic animal identification requirements, whether mandated by state or federal authorities.

We propose strengthening the cattle branding system by encouraging that the brand on branded livestock be reflected on the bill of sale in all sales transactions.

We support legislation to require a “PI” brand on all persistently infected cattle sold at livestock markets.

To deter livestock and rural theft, we support stronger penalties with forfeiture of assets going into a revolving fund within the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) and support continued efforts by ODAFF to investigate livestock and rural thefts and the prosecution of offenders.

We support an adequately funded beef check-off to continue the mission of market promotion, research, nutrition, product safety and education.

We oppose an automatic referendum on the beef-check every five years.

We support pork and beef initiatives funded through check-off programs which educate youth and adults about these industries and products.

We strongly oppose the re-introduction of predatory animals by any government agency.

We strongly favor legislative or regulatory changes that will give the right to any owner to control any predatory animals when the owner and/or tenant, the owner’s family or the owner’s property is in danger.

We demand that USDA reinstate its prohibition of ownership or control of custom feedlots by packers.

We favor competition in the marketplace; therefore, be it resolved that the following be adopted and implemented through legislation:

1. A ban on packer ownership more than 14 days prior to slaughter.

2. Establish provisions for transparency in the market relating to base and forward contracting, including a federal protection plan for whistleblowers and witnesses.


4. Establish parameters for treble damages and recovery of attorney fees from consumers and producers.

5. Ensure grade transparency uniformity at state inspections.

6. Modernize, re-codify, and enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act to meet the standards and expectations of today’s consumers and producers for their protection.

7. Establish and implement a country-of-origin labeling program.
8. Create a USDA “Office of Special Counsel for Competition” to aggressively investigate anti-competitive practices and market manipulation occurring in the agriculture sector and have the authority and subpoena power to collect concentration-related information.

We support the appropriate harvesting of equine in USDA inspected facilities and oppose any legislation prohibiting transportation of equine for harvest.

We oppose a tax on methane gas released by livestock.

We encourage ODAFF to increase monitoring and testing for tuberculosis in livestock and other species as required.

We support the development of reasonable setback distance requirements for new poultry barns from neighboring residences by the state legislature. These setback requirements should be enforced by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry. Protections should be afforded to existing poultry operations.

D. DAIRY AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

We support improving the level of income for dairy farmers to better meet their increased cost of production, in order to maintain a productive capacity to meet anticipated future needs.

We support a stabilized supply of milk and milk products, at levels which will adequately meet the needs of consumers.

Imitation products should not be allowed to be labeled or advertised using dairy terms or names. We oppose redefining the products currently set up with the USDA.

The present pricing method should be continued for fresh, reconstituted milk.

We support raising the minimum standards for fluid whole milk to 10 percent solids; non-fat and skim milk to 99 percent solids non-fat.

We oppose raising the import quota on dairy products and removing tariffs on imported dairy products.

We encourage the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) to make efforts to return milk protein casein plants to foster domestic use in the United States.

E. PEANUTS

We support a more accurate price discovery in the marketplace for peanuts.

We support an annual target price cost of production adjustment for peanuts.

We believe storage and handling fees for peanuts in the government loan program should be paid by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA).

F. OTHERS
We urge and encourage all farmers to explore producing alternate cash crops where soil, water and climate permits, and urge research and extension services at land grant universities to supply valuable help in these areas.

We support a ban on castor bean production in the State of Oklahoma.

We oppose the growing, harvesting and processing of any crop which produces ricin, a toxic substance which can be lethal to humans and animals, can be market disrupting and considered a prime tool for use by terrorists to harm U.S. citizens.

Due to expanding canola production in Oklahoma, we support the creation of actuarial rates that are put in place without prior written agreement requirements.

**FEED, SEED, FERTILIZER, FUEL**

We support research on the use of crops for pharmaceutical and nutraceutical purposes.

We support a program of adequate testing and sampling of commercial fertilizer and feed and seed with penalties being assessed when analysis is below specifications.

We support educating farmers and grain handlers on the Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA).

We support modification of the PVPA of 1994 with respect to royalty fees taking in to consideration sound science, a reasonable period of time for specific commodities and on percentage of purity of seed.

We support immunity from legal action for grain handlers from consequences of the PVPA when handling grain.

We oppose agricultural producers being included in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) enforcement of the spill prevention containment and control system.

We believe that no state or federal executive order affecting the use of farm equipment or farm chemicals should be issued without prior notice and public hearings.

Anhydrous ammonia should continue to be classified as non-hazardous for the purpose of transporting nurse tanks on public roadways.

We encourage privately owned anhydrous ammonia facilities and equipment to meet the same safety requirements and standards as that of licensed dealers. Furthermore, we encourage private owners to attend anhydrous ammonia safety training classes.

We support funding for animal waste nutrients research.

**COMMISSIONS**

A. **COMMODITIES COMMISSION**
We support the commodity commissions, provided that the funds collected by force of law are used for research, promotion, education and policy development, and that their use for political purposes be strictly prohibited.

We oppose state government taking commodity check-off funds to balance budgets.

We support check-off programs on all commodities and periodic reporting to those paying for the check-off. We support mandatorily paid and voluntarily refundable check-off programs.

We support the collection of royalty fees on the sale of products developed by commodity check-off research dollars.

We support the right of referendum by securing signatures of 10 percent of qualified producers of a commodity.

All referenda should be conducted by mail or electronic media to ensure maximum participation by producers. Only eligible producers of a commodity shall have a vote on who is chosen for the promotion board that oversees collection and spending of funds. The eligible producer who receives the greatest number of producer votes must be seated.

We support the right of referendum for a district to recall the appointment of the commissioner from that district.

We urge the commissions to direct greater effort toward removing restrictions or obstructions that unduly limit the flow of agriculture commodities into domestic and foreign markets (such as embargoes, sanctions, strikes, grading standards, unreasonable inspection rules, and banning farm chemicals without sufficient cause and inequitable quality standards on imports).

We oppose the consolidation of commodity commissions and/or any commission being placed under the control of any state agency.

We support the ability of commodity commissions to develop a trust in which to deposit and utilize commission funds.

We support exempting all agricultural commodity commissions from the Office of Management and Enterprise Services state purchasing system.

We favor at least 20 percent of commodity commissions’ gross income being used for research in Oklahoma.

B. SCHOOL LAND COMMISSION

Leaseholders of school lands should be notified of a sale or re-lease.

We support the sale of school land if no more than 5 percent of the school lands in any county are sold within a 12-month period and if all sales of school land are deposited within the trust fund, invested and not made available for use by the Oklahoma Legislature for appropriation purposes. All dividends should be returned to be used for the school children of Oklahoma.
Lessees, who have made improvements on state school lands, should be reimbursed the fair market value for those improvements. Adjoining landowners also should be reimbursed for the portion that he or she paid for when the improvement was made, such as for building a fence.

C. WILDLIFE COMMISSION

We support hunter safety education courses take place in a classroom setting with instruction by a qualified instructor.

We believe licenses or conservation passports be required for activities not related to hunting/fishing on Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) land.

We support legislation to require at least four farmers or ranchers, by occupation, to be members of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission.

We oppose the listing of species as an endangered or threatened species without consideration to private property rights and without a study of the economic impact to the citizens of the state of Oklahoma. We additionally oppose the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service critical habitat rules for threatened species.

We support voluntary pro-active cooperative efforts by the private sector landowner to restore potential threatened species by working with groups like the ODWC rather than a federal regulatory approach which could be counterproductive.

We oppose the ODWC purchasing more land in the State of Oklahoma.

We support the ODWC in leasing private land for use as a wildlife public access area.

We oppose non-native wildlife species introduction in Oklahoma.

We encourage game rangers to conduct their duties in a professional and courteous manner and to respect the landowner and their property rights.

Hunting licenses for the State of Oklahoma should have the following requirement printed on the back of the form: "This license can be canceled if the holder violates the present law of hunting or fishing on private property without permission from the owner, landlord or operator. It is hereby understood that the owner of the property is not responsible for any accident or injury sustained by persons entering land with or without permission."

We recommend that an unlimited number of deer, either sex, be taken in overpopulated areas. Also, we support control of other wildlife species including geese, ducks, cattle egrets, feral hogs, and elk on depredation of farmers’ crops.

We support the enforcement of legislation prohibiting the deliberate release of swine to become feral hogs.

We support agricultural producers’ right to protect crops, livestock and fences from elk in all Oklahoma counties.

We encourage the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) to test and track deer and elk harvested for chronic wasting disease.
We oppose the legalization of the use of dogs in the process of hunting deer.

**ANIMAL WELFARE**

We support animal welfare, as opposed to animal rights.

We urge our members to continue to educate the public on the fact that animals do not possess the same "rights" as humans.

We oppose further laws or state questions, which would limit production agriculture by imposing restrictions on traditional methods of producing swine, poultry, equine and cattle.

We support scientifically sound methods of herdsman ship and the continued use of technological advancements in livestock production for American producers to efficiently supply protein to the world.

**PEST, WEED AND DISEASE CONTROL**

We support funding aggressive actions to prevent human, animal and plant diseases from entering the United States. We support effective strategies for dealing with diseases, should these enter the United States.

We urge immediate action to adequately fund a program to eradicate noxious plants including, but not limited to, all species of mesquite and cedars from Oklahoma. Such a program should include spraying of right-of-ways by federal, state and county agencies where needed.

As a general farm organization representing producers with a variety of commodities, we recognize the diversity of views regarding application of certain chemicals. Therefore we support continued education and responsible use regarding the use of all herbicides and pesticides.

We encourage record-keeping and on-label usage of all crop enhancement products (chemical applications) as a best management practice.

We support increased education on the proper use of dicamba and the continued review of regulations by ODAFF.

We support education efforts by the Oklahoma Cotton Council and Cooperative Extension Service on the proper use of dicamba.

We encourage cooperation among agriculture stakeholders to provide education and training for best management practices for pesticide storage, handling and application.

We encourage the Oklahoma Mesonet and/or the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) be provided funding to create and make available to producers adequate climatic information for the application of herbicides, insecticides and burning.

We encourage implementation of an approved burn plan when doing prescribed burns and if followed precisely, landowners should be provided some degree of liability protection. We
encourage educational programs to inform landowners of the proper way to develop and implement a prescribed burn plan.

We support funding of a prescribed burn indemnity fund to be administered at the ODAFF.

Before an agricultural chemical can be removed from the market, factual evidence must be obtained by the agency with jurisdiction that its use will adversely affect human and animal health or that it is hazardous to the environment and the economic impact be considered when no alternative exists.

We favor enforcement of the law requiring all harvesting equipment be thoroughly cleaned prior to interstate travel.

We support the continued use of phostoxin as pest control in grain storage facilities, until a suitable and affordable replacement is provided.

We urge continued support of the Oklahoma Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory and the Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences (OSU-CVHS).

Now that Oklahoma is a Brucellosis-free state, efforts must continue to ensure that we remain Brucellosis-free.

We support a joint effort between OSU and ODAFF in requesting additional state and federal funds for the control and eradication of ticks, fire ants, killer bees and parasitic mites in domestic bees in Oklahoma.

We support the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) area-wide research efforts in Oklahoma and across the nation to control imported fire ants, using a combination of treatment methods, including natural predators.

We urge the Oklahoma Legislature to continue to appropriate monies to provide for the control and/or eradication of crows, blackbirds, skunks, prairie dogs, beavers, coyotes, raccoons, feral hogs and other predatory animals in areas where they have become destructive or a menace to crops and livestock.

We urge the state and federal government to take more aggressive steps to control feral hogs, including the enforcement and maintenance of feral hog free zones.

We support the right of a landowner to use whatever means possible to protect any agricultural crop or species of livestock, and/or processed feed, seed or other materials used in the production of an agricultural commodity from depredation, damage or destruction by any nuisance animal species.

We urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to support predator control and limit any restrictive rule that affects the ability of the field men to do their work in predator control.

Farmers and ranchers should be allowed to control predators or varmints on their land by the most effective, safe and economical means.
We recommend that any wildlife, or other exotic birds and animals transported to, within, or through the State of Oklahoma, be certified by ODAFF to be free of infectious, contagious and communicable diseases and/or parasites.

We support prescribed burning liability relief legislation to protect individuals that have been educated and follow the appropriate protocols when conducting a burn.

We support the state and federal government working with landowners to utilize prescribed burning to reduce the threat of wildfire.

We support designation of the black vulture as a nuisance species and measures be taken to eliminate this threat to American livestock.

AG RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

We call for a minimum of one agricultural educator and one family and consumer science educator in each county for continuing adult education for farmers, ranchers and homemakers. We also encourage a strong 4-H club program in each county.

We support utilizing a citizen county, district and state advisory system as a means to provide grassroots input to the leadership of the cooperative extension and research service.

We support a concerted effort to obtain adequate funding for Oklahoma State University (OSU), the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station (OAES) and the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES) in every county.

We support developing a national clearinghouse for compiling and making available a database with all agriculture research being conducted by state land-grant universities.

We support the Grazing Lands Research Laboratory at Fort Reno and the Southern Plains Research Lab in Woodward. This research in livestock grazing and erosion control is vital to Southwest United States agriculture.

We support funding for the Expanded Wheat Pasture Research Unit at Oklahoma State University.

We support funding to reestablish the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project.

We encourage the Board of Higher Regents to fully allocate all funds appropriated by the Legislature to OSU and Cooperative Extension and Experiment Station.

We support expanded research on soil health practices by USDA-NRCS, Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, Noble Research Institute and our various agricultural schools in Oklahoma.

We support continued funding for USDA-ARS facilities.
DEFINITIONS

A. HISTORICAL PARITY DEFINED:

Congress has, by law, defined “fair” as the economic relationship that existed between prices received by farmers and their production costs, including family living expenses, during the five-year period 1910-1914.

The prices received by farmers are said to be at “100 percent of parity” (or “fairness”) when they have the same relationship to production and living expenses as they did during that period. The parity formula is kept up-to-date continuously, by:

(1) revising the list of services and items purchased by farmers for production and family living to reflect today’s technology; and
(2) by adjusting the parity prices for each farm commodity to take into account the 10-year moving average of changes that occur in the relationship to each other by the actual market prices received by farmers for the respective commodities.

B. FAMILY FARM DEFINED:

Characteristically, a family farm is owned and operated by a farm family, with the family providing the base of the labor needed for the farming operation, assuming the economic risk, making most of the management decisions and depending on farming and/or ranching for a significant portion of their living.