

2020 Policy of the Ohio Farmers Union

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PREAMBLE

The family type farm is the keystone of our policy. Family agriculture continues to be the base of a strong society.

A family farm is a unit using land and other capital investments, operated by a family member or members, provides the management, takes the economic risk and provides a majority of the labor and supervision of the unit.

We are dedicated to strengthening and preserving the family farm system for present and future generations, by producing adequate supplies of safe food, for our nation's consumers

Farmers are entitled to economic equality with other groups, a fair share of the nation's income and economic growth.

We call for re-establishment of the economic equality for America's farm families through programs that will provide a parity of income and living standards.

We urge that the Farmers Union provide leadership in coordinating the efforts of all farm groups in forwarding these goals.

1 **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF FARM POLICY**

2 **A. Religion**

3 Religious influence plays a major role in the improvement of family farm living. The unique
4 spiritual values of living on the land must be preserved. High moral standards should be
5 encouraged in every area of life. We believe our nation can survive only by perpetuating the
6 great religious principles upon which it was founded. We oppose any measure, which would
7 infringe upon religious freedom. Farmers Union vigorously defends the concept of separation of
8 church and state as contained within the Constitution.

9 **B. Family Farm**

10 A family farm is a unit using land and other capital investments, operated by a family member
11 or members, provides the management, takes the economic risk and provides a majority of the
12 labor and supervision of the unit.

13 **C. Family Farm Corporations**

14 A family farm corporation is a corporation founded for the purpose of farming. Its shareholders
15 must be related to each other by kin.

16 **D. Farm Advisory Board**

17 We propose Farm Advisory Boards to assist the Ohio Director of Agriculture and the U.S.
18 Secretary of Agriculture. These members should consist of bona fide farmers representing and
19 participating in each general farm organization in the United States.

20 Such delegations should not include agents of foreign owned, multi-national, or foreign-
21 controlled grain trading companies.

22 **E. Corporation Farming**

23 In order to protect the family farm and family farm corporation, we recommend Federal and
24 State legislation which would discourage farming systems that do not take into account, triple
25 bottom line practices, including sustained rural communities and land stewardship.

26 **F. Alien Ownership**

27 Foreign interest should be discouraged from engaging directly or indirectly in farming or
28 owning any interest in farmland.

29 We oppose further leasing, ownership, and operation of U.S. farmland by nonresident aliens or
30 their production in this country of agriculture products that compete with U.S. citizens.

31 Farm program benefits should not be allowed for nonfarm corporations.

32 Alien ownership of agricultural entities in the U.S. shall be subject to equal tax and regulatory
33 burden as their American counterparts.

34 To assure a long-range commitment to rural communities, all producers should strive to own all
35 commodities required for that production, such as land, livestock, equipment and machinery
36 appropriate to the number of animals at the facility, in the present and in the future.

37 **G. Ag Land Trust**

38 Investment pension fund and tax-sheltered trust should be regulated by law to ensure that they
39 do not result in control over farmland by large corporate interest. We oppose the use of
40 agricultural land trust agreements by nonfamily farm corporations.

41 **H. Alternative Marketing**

42 We should take interest in and support, when feasible, alternative marketing systems and
43 concepts, which increase farmers marketing control over their commodities.

44 We urge the extension service and agriculture colleges to conduct marketing research and
45 educational marketing programs for farmers. We support the development of local farm
46 markets.

47 **I. Sovereign Immunity**

48 Ohio Farmers Union has always supported the ability and authority for local communities to
49 promote their own prosperity and determine their future by exercising their sovereign rights.
50 Too often, these rights are being pre-empted by state laws or by the World Trade Organization.

51 We support the rights of communities to use the democratic process to determine the character
52 of their food systems and the makeup of their mix of businesses and industries.

53 We believe that local government, such as Township Trustees, Zoning Boards, county boards of
54 health and county commissioners should represent the people of the community and have final
55 jurisdiction over land use.

56 We favor sovereign immunity with respect to the local government.

57 **J. Farmer Controlled Agricultural Cooperatives**

58 The National Farmers Union, the National Grange and the National Milk Producers joined
59 forces and launched a drive in 1917 to establish farmer's legal right to organize and operate
60 cooperative associations. This effort produced the Capper Volstead Act in 1922, which allows
61 collective bargaining of agricultural commodities.

62 When regional and national cooperatives fail to carry out their mission, farmers must take
63 charge.

64 Farmers must take charge of their organizations to make sure they operate for the benefit of
65 their members.

66 **K. Consumer Protection**

67 USDA should not prohibit more stringent testing of any/all animals or animal products for BSE
68 and other pathogens to provide an extra measure of food safety for consumers and in order to
69 satisfy requirements of export markets.

70 Consolidated food production systems have proven to be a threat to consumer health, and make
71 our food supply more vulnerable to agri-terrorism. We support that the FDA should not impede
72 the adoption of more stringent testing for health and safety of food products by private industry
73 to satisfy local needs.

74 We call on the FDA and USDA FSIS to increase efforts to assure that all products, foreign and
75 domestic, meet U.S. health and safety standards. Actions should include increased inspection of
76 imported food products.

77 **L. Labeling – The Full Implementation and Enforcement of**

78 **1.** We support increased funding and strengthening safeguards against agri-
79 terrorism and prevention of infectious pest and diseases.
80

81 **2.** We support the twice passed (2002 & 2008) mandatory Country of Origin
82 Labeling Law and mandatory funding for its implementation.
83

84 **3.** We believe in the consumer’s right to be informed about foods they
85 consume through proper labeling and information.
86

87 **4.** We oppose any effort to block or eliminate the law through the federal
88 appropriations process or through any trade agreements.
89

90 In an era of global agricultural markets and consolidated processing facilities, consumers need
91 effective labeling tools to understand the risks associated with purchase and consumption of
92 foods from the global marketplace. Proper labeling can supply consumers with crucial
93 information regarding food quality and origin having a great impact on individual and
94 community health. Food security can be a matter of individual choice and responsibility only if
95 consumers have access to information regarding food origin and production practices.

96 **M. Food Sovereignty**

97 We support the Declaration of Nyeneli (Mali, 2007) which states “Food sovereignty is the right
98 of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and
99 sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts
100 the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of
101 food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

102 Further, we support the related concept of food security, which believes all peoples have the
103 right to decide what they eat and to ensure that food in their community is healthy and
104 accessible for everyone. Food security is achieved through the production of healthy food that is
105 sold at a fair price. Family farmers and fishers should have the first right to local and regional
106 markets.

107 **II. CROP POLICY**

108 **A. Federal**

109 **1. FARM PROGRAM**

110 Farming is risky business due to uncertainties regarding weather, pests, disease, supply and
111 demand factors and not knowing the sale price because these factors have yet to occur. The
112 Federal Farm Program is policy that gives certainty and stability with the expectation of being
113 profitable; and at the same time assuring a safe, abundant, and economical food supply. This is
114 a safety net for both farmers and consumers.

115 Other components of viable Federal Farm Policy include conservation, nutrition, rural
116 development and renewable energy. Ohio Farmers Union continues to call for:

- 117 a) Price and income support that establishes a floor for market prices
118 and enable producers to obtain their income from the marketplace.
- 119 b) Price support and loan levels should be set at adequate and
120 equitable levels to ensure producers receive a fair return on their
121 investments, and to prevent market distortion.
- 122 c) We support a Federal inventory supply program that provides
123 management for all commodities.
- 124 d) We urge additional Federal legislation to change the current
125 procedure so farmers can purchase moderate crop insurance at a higher
126 level per acre.
- 127 e) We support the transition away from relying on direct farm
128 payments and promote reliance on sustainable market prices based on the
129 cost of production. We support a national safety net policy that protects
130 family farms and we support the National Farmers Union policy on
131 providing a safety net.
- 132 f) We support a firm, enforceable payment of no more than \$50,000,
133 per participant in any Federal Farm Program.
- 134 g) Since the current Federal Farm Program requires less than 1
135 percent of the Federal Budget, there should be no reductions in present
136 benefits to family farmers.
- 137
- 138 h) The Ohio Farmers Union believes that it is critical to maintain the
139 linkage between agricultural policy and public nutrition in the Farm Bill.
140 We recognize the importance of this historic partnership among
141 taxpayers, producers and consumers. Ohio Farmers Union is committed
142 to working with other groups in Ohio to keeping the nutrition title in the
143 Farm Bill.
- 144

145 **2. FARMER STORAGE**

146 We support on-farm storage and encourage producer utilization of the on-farm facility loan
147 program, which will ultimately provide financial assistance in the construction of on-farm
148 storage facilities. Producers should be reimbursed for storage at the prevailing UGSA. (Uniform
149 Grain Storage Agreement)

150 **3. TOBACCO**

151 In 2004, Congress passed a \$10 billion tobacco quota farmer buy-out that did not include
152 continued support for cooperatively owned marketing institutions, tobacco dependent
153 communities, or federal oversight of tobacco by the Food and Drug Administration.

154 With the tobacco buy-out “off the legislative table” and the components of the 1938 tobacco
155 program all but terminated, important issues and questions remain about how tobacco is to be
156 produced, processed and marketed in this country and abroad.

157

158 a) We support efforts to ensure the integrity of the crop in its
159 production, processing, distribution and eventual use in manufactured
160 tobacco products.
161

162 b) Failure to enact fair and comprehensive FDA reform over tobacco
163 will allow tobacco companies to not only conduct “business as usual” but
164 also encourage companies to enter the market place to produce cheaper
165 cigarettes using cheaper, unregulated, foreign tobacco.
166

167 **We urge action by Congress and the Administration to:**

- 168 • Ensure that tobacco growers and quota holders are provided with timely, fair and
169 equitable compensations for their quota;
- 170 • Provide for a plan and funding for economic development assistance to tobacco-
171 dependent communities;
- 172 • Establish country-of –origin labeling for tobacco;
- 173 • Ensure that all imported tobacco meets the same standards of domestic leaf and is
174 monitored and tracked in a similar fashion as domestic leaf;
- 175 • Ensure, at least for the short term, that tobacco production should be restricted to areas
176 already producing tobacco until such time as an effective operational system and
177 structure is in place;
- 178 • Encourage USDA to continue research to develop new uses for tobacco plants, such as
179 development of any pesticide properties, and medical research;
- 180 • Ensure that GMO tobacco (genetically modified) is carefully monitored, tested, evaluated
181 and certified;
- 182 • Support the President’s Commission on Tobacco recommendations and the efforts of the
183 Alliance for Health Economic and Agricultural Development (AHEAD);
- 184 • Act to establish a new chapter under the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act for the fair and
185 effective regulation of all tobacco products in the way in which they are manufactured,
186 sold, labeled and marketed and ensure that growers and stakeholders have the
187 opportunity to provide input and comments on any future rules issued by FDA;
- 188 • Ensure that adequate funding is provided for grower compensation, as well as tobacco
189 control, education and cessation programs;
- 190 • Establish mechanisms by which tobacco and tobacco products can be monitored and
191 tracked in interstate and foreign commerce to prevent the illegal manufacture, sale,
192 distribution of tobacco products. The trafficking and smuggling of tobacco products is a
193 national and international multi-billion-dollar crime phenomenon negatively impacting
194 of growers, responsible manufacturers, and public health.

195 **4. ALTERNATIVE AND SPECIALTY CROPS**

196 We support independent continued research into the production and profitable marketing of
197 alternative crops, as well as the implementation of a safety net for specialty crops.

198 The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) should make efforts to support value added
199 processing and implementation.

200 **5. TERMINATOR SEED TECHNOLOGY**

201 Terminator seed technology, a patented seed stock that has been DNA-manipulated to be sterile,
202 preventing the seed from germinating. Several moral and ethical questions must be raised.

203

204 Such technology would put too much control of the production of the world's food supply in one
205 corporation's hands.

206 Seed companies claim they need this technology to recover their development costs. Such costs
207 are already recovered in the sales price of the seeds. A public office-USDA jointly developed the
208 technology. Therefore, taxpayers have already paid for part of the technology.

209 USDA and its scientists will reportedly receive royalties of net sales of the product, which runs
210 counter to the intended duties of public officials and public offices.

211 Such technology is costlier, enhancing the trend of making food accessible only to those
212 countries that can afford it.

213 If Terminator seed technology becomes more prevalent in mainstream food production, the
214 world's food supply will become more susceptible to major disasters.

215 Terminator technology raises far more moral and ethical questions than solutions to food
216 production and distribution. Technology should work for man, not the other way around
217 Terminator technology, in its current form would be a potential tool for placing power in the
218 hands of a few to oppress many.

219 **6. TECHNOLOGY FEES**

220 Technology fees for seed stock, herbicides and pharmaceuticals should not be charged to
221 American producers or consumers.

222 **7. SEED SAVING AND GENETIC DIVERSITY**

223 We support genetic diversity in our crops, recognizing that the traits needed for successful crop
224 production tomorrow come from the genetic diversity of today. Farmers should be permitted to
225 use any seeds grown on their farms as seed stock in future years without penalty. Via policy
226 action to keep Ohio laws from outlawing seed exchange and by directly supporting seed
227 libraries, we will support and encourage both seed saving and the open exchange of heirloom
228 and open-pollinated seed.

229 **8. LIABILITY FOR POLLEN DRIFT**

230 Any liability for pollen drift contamination of crops should lie with the patent holder of the GMO
231 seed that was the source of the contamination. We believe the patent holders of any seed stock
232 should be legally responsible for any contamination of any crops via pollen drift. We support
233 legislation to this end. Focus should be on the patent holder and not the family farmer.

234

235 **9. Liability for Herbicide Drift**

236

237 Any liability for herbicide drift contamination of crops should lie with the patent holder of the
238 chemical that was the source of the contamination. We believe the patent holders of any
239 herbicides should be legally responsible for any contamination of any crops via herbicide drift.

240 We support legislation to this end. Focus should be on the patent holder and not the family
241 farmer.

242 **B. State**

243 **1. DELAYED PRICING**

244 We oppose the delayed price concept of selling grain. Delayed price immediately puts the grain
245 into the marketing channels, which depresses the market and thus defeats the purpose of
246 storing grain.

247 Further, title to the grain is relinquished thereby limiting the farmer to only 80% price recovery
248 in the event of elevator insolvency.

249

250 We urge farmers to use other marketing options for their grain that offer a better sale price and
251 full recovery in the event of elevator failure.

252 **2. PROTECTION OF GRAIN DEPOSITORS**

253 OFU will work with the Ohio Director of Agriculture and his appointees to help make the grain
254 indemnity fund program successful. We will also work to ensure that the O.D.A. budget
255 includes adequate funding for the inspection of grain warehouses.

256 OFU supports recently enacted changes to the Grain Indemnity Law. The increase from 1/2 cent
257 to 3/4 cent insures adequate resources to cover elevator losses for farmers. Of equal importance
258 is the codifying of the Ohio Revised Code language that gives farmers priority lien if an elevator
259 fails.

260 **3. STATE REGULATION OF MOISTURE AND GRAIN GRADING**

261 We advocate development of a standard discount and dockage schedule to be used by the
262 commercial grain trade in Ohio and for strict enforcement of testing and grading procedures.
263 Grain taken out of storage should be tested for moisture and any foreign materials present. A
264 premium equal to the shrinkage loss should be paid at market price to the farmer for grain
265 testing lower than the dry grain moisture standard for said grain. When farmers sell their grain,
266 it should be bought under the same federal standards as when elevators sell grain.

267 We call for passage of legislation that will require the Ohio Department of Agriculture to fund
268 and test the calibration of moisture testing equipment annually.

269 **III. LIVESTOCK POLICY**

270 **A. Dairy Programs**

271 Many improvements can be to further strengthen and simplify the dairy program. We support
272 the development of a comprehensive dairy program, which provides long-term inventory supply
273 management to family-sized farms. Such a program, should also include, but is not limited to
274 the following:

- 275 1. Allows for sustainable environmental practices
- 276 2. Allows producer earnings, which cover production cost, plus a reasonable profit from the
277 marketplace
- 278 3. Allows for a price support program, which is established by using the feed cost to price ratio.
- 279 4. Allows for a high-quality, stable supply, with regulation of supply and demand

- 280 5. Allows for incentive premium payment, if a domestic dairy producer agrees to voluntarily
281 limit production
- 282 6. Allows for a floor price on milk that helps producers earn a fair return
- 283 7. Allows for the encouraged use of GSM-102 export credit guarantees, the Market Access
284 Program (MAP), to help producers be competitive in a world market
- 285 8. Allows USDA inspection of imported casein intended for use in standardized food products
- 286 9. Allows for the restriction of Imported Milk Protein (MPC)/Ultra Filtered (UF) milk products
287 in use in standardized food products
- 288 10. Allows for labeling, including country-of-origin, rbST-free, organic or grass-fed labeling
- 289 11. Future improvements should not reward those who do not choose to participate in the
290 program
- 291 12. Allows for dairy-related education in our nation's classrooms
- 292 13. Allows for a variety of milk products to be added to the school lunch programs, and
293 nutritional programs for low-income families
- 294 14. Allows for production and marketing research to enhance family farm income, including
295 both domestic and international trade
- 296 15. Prevents the use of Imported Milk Protein (MPC) and Ultra Filtered (UF) Milk products in
297 cheese products
- 298 16. We advocate the implementation of a dairy indemnity fund
- 299 17. We support targeting payments such as, MILC to family size farms
- 300 18. OFU supports the development of standards, including waiver by purchasers and
301 safeguards, by which raw milk may be legally sold by a farmer, to an informed willing buyer
- 302 19. OFU urges the FDA not to change the definition of milk
- 303 20. As raw milk producers, we fully realize the important role that processors play in turning our
304 product into a variety of useful and nutritious foods. In addressing the role of producer costs
305 of production, the USDA completely ignored existing law as written in the 1937 Agriculture
306 Marketing Agreement Act, section 608c(18). The USDA arguments given here are irrelevant
307 to the core issue that raw milk does indeed have value. Saying that milk has no value
308 without being pasteurized, at least, is comparable to saying that crude oil, iron ore, and a
309 host of other raw materials have no value. It is our opinion that existing law must be looked
310 at and followed by the Secretary of Agriculture in the creation and implementation of policy.

311 **B. Block Voting**

312 Block voting by cooperatives and testimony given by industry on behalf of dairy farmers has not
313 always been in the best interest of their producers.

314 We, therefore, support change in policy in which U.S.D.A. notifies all dairy farmers 30 days
315 prior to any Federal Order Hearings, in order to assure that producers' inputs are heard. We
316 also support reimbursement of expense by U.S.D.A. to producers who choose to attend these
317 hearings.

318 **C. Conventional and Certified Organic Beef**

319 We call for scientific studies comparing organic to conventionally grown beef. Studies need to
320 determine:

- 321 1. Nutritional analysis of organic beef and conventionally grown beef;
- 322 2. Residue analysis of each type of beef;
- 323 3. Differences in effects, if any, of consuming each type;
- 324 4. Public acceptance

- 325 5. Economic impact of organic vs. conventionally grown beef, including impact on farmers'
326 production costs, demand for corn and other commodities used for feeding cattle, ripple
327 effect on farm communities.
328 6. The nutritional benefits of grass-fed beef and dairy products.

329 **D. Manure Management and Nutrient Management**

330 We believe that all farms should have conservation plans, including a significant section on
331 nutrient management. These plans should be in a format approved of by the NRCS. Regular soil
332 testing is an essential part of nutrient management. Although numerous private laboratories will
333 analyze soil samples, most are connected to companies that sell fertilizer. We urge the re-
334 opening of the Ohio State Soil testing lab, including the process whereby soil test results are sent
335 to the county extension agents. If Ohio State University remains adamant that they will not re-
336 open the lab, we urge Central State University to consider a soil testing lab as part of their
337 agricultural program.

338 The Ohio Department of Agriculture should enforce a rigorous chain of accountability and
339 liability that connects the livestock farm that generates the manure, the transport of the manure,
340 and the application of the manure. If a water quality problem occurs due to over application of
341 manure, or manure application on snow covered, frozen, or saturated soils, the responsibility
342 shall lie with the livestock farm generating the manure, the Certified Livestock Manager, the
343 manure applicator and the landowner.

344 **E. Confined Animal Feeding Operations and Animal Feeding**
345 **Operations**
346

347 The Ohio Farmers Union supports changes in the regulations that are necessary to obtain a
348 permit to operate a CAFO from the livestock environmental permitting program. These changes
349 will include:

- 350 1. If a water quality problem occurs due to a manure lagoon spill or breach, the
351 responsibility lies with the CAFO owner.
352 2. If a water quality problem occurs due to over application of manure, or manure
353 application on snow covered, frozen, or saturated soils, the responsibility shall lie with
354 the CAFO owner, and/or the Certified Livestock Manager, the manure applicator and/or
355 the landowner.
356 3. The ODA should make public input a mandatory part of the permitting process, not a
357 mere formality after the fact, as seems to be the way it is currently addressed.'
358 4. Before CAFO's are permitted, a committee should be formed to facilitate the sharing of
359 pertinent information. This committee will consist of residents, ODA officials, and
360 facility owner/operators.
361 5. Because these facilities do not operate indefinitely, a bond for 30% of the construction
362 costs and a closure plan should be required so that tax payers do not end up with the bill
363 for environmental remediation.

364 Northwest Ohio is home to many Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) that are not required
365 to go through the above CAFO permitting process. However, the operations may also
366 contribute to water quality problems through improper manure disposal. Therefore, (3)
367 above should apply to all AFOs. We recommend that the county extension agents compile a
368 list of all AFOs in their jurisdictions.

369 **F. National Animal Identification System (NAIS)**

370 We oppose mandatory implementation of NAIS, until questions involving confidentiality of
371 information, producer’s cost and equity of administration between producers of various sizes
372 can be clarified. Additionally, we oppose the “back-door” implementation of NAIS by the USDA
373 or state departments of agriculture.

374 **G. Antibiotic Resistance and Livestock Care**

375 Ohio Farmers Union supports the use of antibiotics for treating illness in livestock; however, we
376 are concerned about the growing problem of antibiotic resistance. We agree with the FDA and
377 AMA that the practice of routine feeding of antibiotics to healthy livestock and poultry are
378 contributing to this growing concern. We support phasing out the routine feeding of antibiotics
379 to healthy livestock for the growth promotion purposes. We support the U.S. Food and Drug
380 Administration’s directive to require veterinary prescription for the use of antibiotics in animal
381 feed.

382 **IV. TAX POLICY**

383 **A. Education**

384 The members of the Ohio Farmers union believe that the central principle of State tax policy
385 should be taxation based on the ability of taxpayers to meet their tax liability. This principle
386 should be reflected not only in the state income tax, but it must also apply to the property tax
387 structure. To this end we recommend that we reverse the present trend toward increased
388 reliance on the farmers and homeowners of this State to produce our needed revenue.

389 All property tax exemptions given to religious, charitable, and educational organizations must
390 be reviewed to ensure that they accomplish their worthy goal of promoting the public good and
391 do not serve to excuse profit operations from their legal responsibilities.

392 OFU opposes the trend to reallocate funds for public education toward vouchers and charter
393 schools. We call on the General Assembly to restore the 10% rollback and the 2.5% residential
394 reduction, which were repealed when the Governor and the General Assembly balanced the
395 State Budget in the summer of 2013. All of these real property tax relief measures were a
396 promise made to farmers and homeowners when the state Income tax was enacted during the
397 1970’s and that promise has now been broken. Additional revenues should come from
398 increasing the graduation feature of the State income tax on both personal and corporate
399 income and not with additional fees. We also recommend that the corporate income (franchise)
400 tax be reinstated.

401 **CAUV:** We continue to support the Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV) law that should
402 allow farmland owners to pay reasonable real estate taxes on farm and woodland based on its
403 “use value.” We welcome the recent changes made by the Ohio General Assembly (2017) that
404 have alleviated, somewhat, the past skyrocketing increases in values with a downward,

405 decreasing trend in values. We will continue to work for a more accurate CAUV formula in the
406 future.

407 **B. Legislation**

408 The Ohio Farmers Union supports legislation that would use state income tax revenue to
409 adequately provide funds for public education, including Vocational, Technical, Arts and
410 Physical Education instruction for grades 9 through 12. The Ohio Legislature should approve
411 the following approach for adequate school funding to take effect over a period of time.

412 The Ohio Farmers Union supports legislation that would use state income tax revenue to
413 adequately provide funds for public education, including Vocational, Technical, Arts and
414 Physical Education instruction for grades 9 through 12. The Ohio Legislature should approve
415 the following approach for adequate school funding to take effect over a period of time.

- 416 1. Provide for a uniform millage rate for the operation of public schools K-12 (for example, 20
417 mills).
- 418 2. Provide for a uniform local school income tax for public schools K-12 (for example, 1%).
- 419 3. Provide that business and industry real estate taxes that go to public schools, be collected on
420 a state-wide basis and be distributed to public schools on a per pupil basis. If the Ohio
421 General Assembly and Governor do not approve this legislation, the Ohio Farmers Union
422 will work with those organizations that will support all, or a major part of this concept to
423 adequately fund public education. Any school revenue decrease by changes in the Ohio tax
424 structure must be replaced by funds from another source. All state required mandates for
425 public education must be funded in the state budget.

426 We support a Constitutional mandate that the General Assembly must secure a thorough and
427 efficient system of public schools, which means that each Ohio child has the fundamental right
428 to a higher quality education; and request the General Assembly to cost out a high quality
429 education program and enact a school funding program which insures that each school district
430 has available the minimum stat established standards, including facilities, equipment,
431 technology, materials, supplies and personnel to provide a high quality education to every child.

432 We continue to support the principle of the homestead exemption for senior citizens and
433 recommend that its use be expanded upon.

434 We oppose all tax abatement programs that eliminate or forgive real estate property taxes on
435 industrial and commercial property for future tax periods. We also support the repeal and
436 elimination of Ohio's "Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Law" contained in Ohio
437 Revised Code Sections 3735.65-70.

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C. Other Tax Recommendations

1. We support the 10% investment tax credit and income averaging for farmers.
2. We recommend that the social security tax rate for self-employed persons be reduced to the same level that employees pay. We further recommend that the upper limit on income being taxed for social security be raised to cover any lost revenue due to change in the self-employed rate or deficits in social security funds.
3. Consumer excise taxes are regressive and unfair to all working-class people. We are opposed to any increase in consumer excise taxes.
4. OFU opposes the regressive Commercial Activity Tax (CAT).
5. We support state legislation enacting a state income tax credit for all landowners applying to have land placed in an agricultural district. This tax credit would also apply to land currently enrolled as an agricultural district.

D. Tax Revenue Sharing, Federal Grants and Aid and National Sales Tax

We acknowledge that a system of progressive taxation at the federal level is superior to the system of taxation in the states. In the effort to adopt at state levels a system of taxation based on income as contrasted to property, Farmers Union is seeking additional state tax reform. As states adopt tax reform measures, we also support improved programs of Federal grants-in-aid to states and Federal State cost sharing, especially in supplementing property taxes, which bear an increasingly greater share of the costs of financing educational programs. We oppose a so-called “value added” national tax, which is merely a thinly disguised national sales tax.

E. Highway Fuel Tax

All segments of our society benefit from goods and services that travel our roads and bridges. We therefore urge an increase in the fuel tax and that all monies derived from the new users’ tax go for improvements or repairs to roads or bridges.

For years, local governments have been exempted from paying federal gasoline tax back to the Federal Government. We oppose the removal of this exemption.

We support an exemption for farm licensed trucks hauling farm commodities between field, farm or market (traveling less than 3000 miles per year), per vehicle, be exempt from IFTA (International Fuel Tax Agreement) filing.

F. Woodland Tax Values in Ohio

In an ongoing quest for fair and equitable taxation, we call upon the Ohio General Assembly to review and reduce the property taxes on woodlands. Woodland areas provide substantial environmental benefits by cleaning surface and ground water, by removing carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen. Also, forestlands have the capacity to sequester many tons of carbon in soils and forest biomass.

476 **V. FINANCE POLICY**

477 **A. Federal**

478 **1. Interests and Farm Credit**

479 a) We support young farmer’s credit legislation, to provide credit for
480 young farmers on a long term pro-rated low interest basis.

481 b) We urge the funding (passage of legislation) to enable the State to
482 assist beginning family farms by at least providing no interest loans to go
483 toward a percentage of the interest paid on private loans secured by
484 farmers at lending institutions or through private sources. This would
485 help offset the high cost of upgrading family farming operations and help
486 secure a better future for family farms in this state.

487 c) We support the present Agricultural Linked Deposits Loan
488 Program operated by the State Treasurer’s Office and recommend that it
489 be continued and expanded in the future to the level of at least \$500
490 million per year.

491 d) ODA and USDA should make every effort to make USDA
492 guaranteed farm loans available in every rural community.

493 e) We oppose the privatization of the farm credit system.

494 **VI. ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE**

495 **A. Ohio Farmers Union Farmland Preservation Position**

496 The state of Ohio has established within the Ohio Department of Agriculture, a special office to
497 encourage farmland preservation in Ohio. By utilizing private, federal and state funding, this
498 office arranges the purchases or donations of agricultural or conservation easements on Ohio
499 farmland.

500 Ohio Farmers Union and its members actively support this (new) program on the state and
501 county levels as an effective way to preserve our farmland.

502 **B. Land and Watershed Use Policy**

503 1. Goals: All life and human development is dependent upon an agricultural economy that can
504 insure an adequate supply of food, fiber and energy. It is in the best interest of our State to
505 promote land uses that are consistent with the goal of protecting and preserving agricultural
506 lands, a finite and irreplaceable resource, while allowing farmers to maintain and improve
507 drainage and fertility to protect family farm profits.

508 2. Agricultural lands are under attack from urban pressure and runaway development, high
509 cost of public services, increasing taxation geared to an inflated market value, loss of
510 irreplaceable soil and land resources, and most importantly a steady decrease in the number
511 of family farming units brought on by an inadequate return on investment. The problems are
512 statewide in scope and local in their immediate effect. Farmers should make use of the
513 Farmland Preservation Act, which protects farmers against utility assessments and private
514 nuisance suits.

515 3. The protection of our water resources is critical not only to continuing farm operations, but
516 as a source of drinking water for the vast majority of rural residents. We encourage the
517 conservation of subterranean and surface water use.

518 4. We oppose the federal government’s purchase of water rights anywhere in the United States.

- 519 5. We oppose the damming of rivers for municipal water supplies when it forces people from
520 their homes, their farms, and has a negative impact on farm drainage systems. We believe
521 an above ground reservoir along with better water management, including recycling, would
522 be a better solution. O.F.U. recognizes that a sound regional food policy rejects the notion of
523 depleting one region's resources for supposed benefits of another. Thus, massive water
524 shipment projects, such as the proposal to transfer water from the Great Lakes to the
525 Western states defeat the concept of a rational food program.
- 526 6. We oppose the further establishment of Wildlife Preserve Areas by the Government
527 Agencies, unless surrounding farmers are notified and consulted as to the "Agricultural
528 Impact" of such wildlife or Preserve areas.
- 529 7. Private landowners should not be penalized for converting wetlands on which no wetland
530 determination (has been) was made before 1985.
- 531 8. We feel wetland regulation on private farmland, should be limited to projects of high
532 environmental value and that property taxes should be (lowered) eliminated to compensate
533 for the loss of other potential uses. If the maintenance of a wetland is determined to be
534 valuable enough for protection for community benefit, then the landowner must be
535 compensated. Any mitigation of wetlands should be done within the same county or
536 watershed. We support NRCS as the exclusive agency controlling wetland issues. To be
537 regulated, wetlands must exceed five contiguous acres.
- 538 9. Watersheds - Ohio Farmers Union proposes that the law be amended to require each county
539 to make swift and effective use of their drainage maintenance funds.

540 **C. Mines and Quarries**

541 The Ohio Farmers Union realizes the need for minerals including oil, gas, coal, and aggregates;
542 as well the need for lumber.

543 We oppose the mining, drilling, and commercial logging, except for routine maintenance, on all
544 state property, on prime farmland, in populated areas, and under public roads.

545 We also oppose the practice of "mountain-top" mining.

546 **D. Federal Conservation Programs**

547 The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 calls for increased investments in
548 conservation efforts.

- 549 1. We support full implementation and funding for title II conservation programs. We believe
550 that the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) should be fully funded and that
551 the \$450,000 payment limit be reduced to \$50,000. The Conservation Stewardship
552 (Security) Program (CSP) should be fully funded, implemented, and made available to all
553 watersheds and family farms. We believe that the Farm Service Agency (FSA) farmer elected
554 committee system should over-see and administer all conservation programs with technical
555 assistance provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and/or the Soil
556 and Water Conservation District (SWCD).
- 557 2. We encourage the FSA and other local conservation districts, to include large diameter
558 drainage tile, as an approved practice for EQIP funding.

559 **E. Hazardous Waste**

560 We propose legislation for the EPA (state and federal) to stop dumping of hazardous nuclear,
561 low-level radioactive and toxic waste into Ohio land. We also encourage development of

562 hazardous and low-level radioactive waste disposal methods other than landfills with stricter
563 enforcement of laws on transporting and handling hazardous and low-level radioactive waste.

564 We oppose the method of deep well injection of dangerous chemicals and hazardous waste
565 because of the risk of contaminating our water sources.

566 Those who work with or live near such dangerous chemicals have a right to know their contents
567 and risks. Our groundwater must be safeguarded from contamination. The adequate
568 monitoring of hazardous waste sites and industry producing hazardous waste by the EPA is
569 essential to maintain a safe environment. Industry should be required to keep records of
570 delivery to other states.

571 Early notice and meaningful participation by local government and residents must be part of
572 any waste facility approval process. Landowners need statutory rights to recover damages and
573 legal costs caused by waste facilities.

574 We encourage efforts to ensure that all costs of hazardous disposal are borne by generators of
575 that waste. Farmers Union encourages the least contamination method to dispose of waste,
576 which seems to be incinerating.

577 We recommend ongoing recycling of any hazardous waste on the site where the waste is created.
578 We encourage the State of Ohio and the Federal Government to require the recycling and
579 detoxification of hazardous waste.

580 We urge the State of Ohio to comply with the 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right
581 to Know Act. Oil and gas well operators must report all hazardous chemicals in use or stored at
582 drilling sites to the Ohio State Emergency Response Commission, co-chaired by the Ohio EPA
583 and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. The Ohio SERC should maintain a database with
584 this information that is easily accessible to first responders and the public.

585 **F. Regulation on Gas and Oil Wells**

586 In order to protect our fresh water supply in areas where gas and oil well drilling is done,
587 inspections should be made when drilling pits are being pumped, also when they are being
588 closed to ensure that proper procedures are followed. Restoration of every site should be a
589 requirement to preserve our land and water. A certifiable bond should be required to guarantee
590 this restoration. Seeding should be made in every case and kept mowed around well and tank
591 battery. Restoration plans should be constructed with culvert pipe installed at streams or
592 waterways. Fences should be constructed around well and tank battery to protect people and
593 animals, also to stop vandalism. Dikes should be constructed around tank batteries made of
594 such material and built high enough and strong enough to contain whatever liquid is in the
595 tanks in the battery, also, to prevent the use of any well for purpose of waste disposal. Sales or
596 transfer of leases should have landowner approval.

597 Ohio Farmers Union supports a statute for the installation of transmission lines, which
598 addresses concerns such as rights-of-way, soil compaction, land slope, restoring topsoil and
599 replacing drainage tile. It also calls for monitoring the project no less than two years after initial
600 restoration of right-of-way. We also support a position within the Ohio Department of Natural
601 Resources Soil & Water division which would be responsible for seeing that such guidelines are
602 met. We would support state appropriation of the necessary funding for such a position.

603

604 **G. Pollution**

605 Farmers Union recognizes the importance of maintaining a clean and healthful environment
606 and supports efforts to curb the pollution of that environment. We specifically recommend the
607 following:

- 608 1. We support the implementation of a comprehensive solid waste management plan that is
609 geared toward reducing the amount of waste stream into landfills. It can be achieved by
610 educating and encouraging society to recycle, further research into other forms of disposal
611 (i.e. incineration) and new market development of recycled and biodegradable products.
- 612 2. We strongly endorse the concept of a deposit on all beverage containers. Such a deposit
613 should be adequate to ensure the return of said containers.
- 614 3. We support legislation that limits garbage and solid waste dumping from other states and
615 encourages strong penalties for such dumping.
- 616 4. We recommend that the government use re-cycled paper. We encourage the printing
617 industry to use re-cycled paper and soy ink.
- 618 5. We recommend that the Clean Air Act not be weakened, and that hydrogen sulfide and
619 ammonia emission standards be established and enforced.
- 620 6. We believe that all interest accrued from monies deposited in County Ditch Funds should be
621 returned to that fund. This will keep the funds benefiting the intended purpose of a well-
622 maintained ditch project.
- 623 7. With the increased presence and proposals of industrialized farms, Ohio's Governmental
624 agencies must be up to the task of assuring that these operations are environmentally
625 friendly and are following the law.

626 **H. Carbon Sequestration**

627 OFU urges aggressive action to mitigate climate change. We support various conservation
628 methodologies, especially terrestrial carbon sinks designed to reduce greenhouse gasses and
629 programs designed to capture and sequester carbon.

630 **I. State Wildlife Regulations**

631 We recommend that the Division of Wildlife and all sportsmen's organizations conduct
632 educational programs for the licensed hunter emphasizing the importance of hunting laws and
633 hunting techniques.

634 We urge the passage of laws stating that the act of hunting any game animal or fowl while on
635 private property and without express written permission of the owner be classified as a 3rd
636 degree misdemeanor; and that upon conviction of such an offense, the crime is to be punishable
637 by a minimum of 10 days in the county jail in addition to all other penalties presently in place
638 and enforced by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife.

639 We urge the state wildlife department to better control the population of any wildlife that are a
640 detriment to farm income and assets and that a fund be established by the Wildlife Department
641 to compensate for producers' crop losses. We urge research to develop a better motor safety
642 vehicle device to repel deer.

643 We further recommend that a uniform badge or tag identification system be adopted statewide,
644 which would allow local game protectors to determine in the field those hunters having owner
645 permission to hunt.

646 We believe that the farmer should have the right to charge hunters a fee to hunt on his land. The
647 hunter and the farmer should agree on the fee. The hunter should be respectful of the owner's
648 land and have no right to sue for any reason.

649 We support the Coyote Indemnity Fund in the biennial budget of the Ohio Department of
650 Agriculture. This budget should presently be funded adequately to meet all the claims of the
651 budget year.

652 Ohio Farmers Union is open to debate any proposal to control coyotes and other species. We
653 support the livestock protection collar.

654 We support passage of legislation and/or fair management of the funds in the Coyote Indemnity
655 Fund by the Ohio Department of Agriculture and encourage a state bounty.

656 The Ohio Farmers Union urges the passage of laws regulating the operation of sports vehicles
657 such as snowmobiles, ATVs, etc., on private property and without express written permission of
658 the owner be classified as a 3rd degree misdemeanor and (that) upon conviction of such as
659 offense, the crime is to be punishable by a minimum of ten days in the county jail, plus
660 restitution for property or crop damage to all other penalties presently in place and enforced by
661 the law enforcement agencies of the state.

662 **J. Nutrient Management**

663 The Ohio Farmers Union supports the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture rules requiring nutrient
664 management planning for farmers in watersheds that have been declared to be in "In Distress."
665 In order to address water quality issues across Ohio, Ohio Farmers Union recommends the state
666 of Ohio adopt the standards set forth in the USDA Conservation Practice Standard on Nutrient
667 Management (Code 590) as the basis for Nutrient Management Plans with application rates
668 limited to the annual agronomic rate of the next intended crop.

669 **VII. TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY**

670 **A. Rural Transportation**

671 A well-maintained transportation system in our rural area is essential to the movement of food
672 and fiber and is an important part of Ohio's number one industry agriculture. The condition of
673 rural roads and bridges are such that immediate attention should be given to their
674 improvements. We oppose the further removal of railroad lines.

675 Funds raised by the State should be distributed to the local government (county and township)
676 by a formula, which recognizes the need for maintaining transportation in our less populated
677 rural areas. This formula should give priority to bridges, which have deteriorated to a
678 dangerous condition.

679 **B. Ohio Turnpike**

680 There has been a dramatic increase in highway traffic along parallel highways causing many
681 more highway fatalities and congestion in many communities. This is causing higher outlays of
682 funds from O.D.O.T. than would normally be necessary. The Ohio Farmers Union believes that
683 there should be action taken by the Ohio General Assembly to request budget approval of the
684 Ohio Turnpike Commission or steps be taken to assume the responsibility of the management
685 and bond financing of the Ohio Turnpike.

686 We strongly urge the Ohio Turnpike not be privatized, and that the Ohio Turnpike Commission
687 be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the turnpike and overpasses.

688 **C. Railroad Abandonment**

689 In case of railroad abandonment, the company should make an effort to turn over all or parts of
690 the property in question to local business for sidings or short line transportation. The cost of
691 such a turnover should be at the salvage value of the track and other facilities. Where there is a
692 potential buyer, the transaction should be made within one year. Any property, which cannot be
693 feasibly returned to service or sold to another party, should be, released to adjoining property
694 owners at no cost and no liability.

695 **D. Railroad Safety**

696 Vehicle-train collisions have become an increasingly serious problem, especially in our rural
697 areas. We encourage the PUCO to promptly appropriate its Federal Assistance Funds, allowing
698 the installation of signals and gates at crossings where they are needed most. We propose
699 rumble strips be installed a distance from all railroad crossings and that every railroad approach
700 meet state standards.

701 **E. Fuel Policy**

702 We call on the federal government to:

- 703 1. Assure priority deliveries of gasoline, diesel, propane, and other fuels to farmers in an
704 equitable fashion.
- 705 2. In case of emergencies we allocate crude oil among refineries to assure equitable supplies to
706 all areas.
- 707 3. We call for full-scale Congressional investigation concerning inventories of both supply and
708 reserves of crude oil and petroleum products including the outlook for meeting future
709 domestic needs from developable domestic sources of crude oil and gas. Increasing costs of
710 gasoline, fuel oil and natural gas would also increase inflationary pressures. We encourage
711 research and development of new energy sources by the Federal Government. The Antitrust
712 laws should be rigidly enforced to prevent monopoly in the energy field.
- 713 4. We encourage enactment, implementation and enforcement of fuel quality standards in the
714 state of Ohio.
- 715 5. Home heating fuel should be exempt from sales tax.

716 **F. Renewable and Alternative Energy**

717 This nation requires an ever-increasing supply of dependable and economical energy. Nowhere
718 is this problem better realized and potentially remedied than in the agricultural segment of our
719 economy. Because America's farmers and ranchers are committed to being part of our nations'
720 energy security, and at the same time enhancing economic opportunities within communities
721 across the country, and with community-based energy development reducing concentration and
722 increasing competition that benefits local communities; we urge congress to implement and
723 fully fund the Renewable Fuel Standard that is written in the 2008 farm bill, which included a
724 target of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels produced domestically. Additionally, we call for
725 strengthened regulatory authority and transparency to restore the intended function of energy
726 and commodity futures markets. In order to decrease our dependence on traditional fossil fuels
727 (particularly imported fuels) we urge the following action on these sources of alternative energy.

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1. Renewable Fuel

1. Fuels produced from corn, soybeans, sugar beets, potatoes, waste, cellulous, bio-mass and other agricultural products are now being manufactured and sold commercially in several states and have proven to be successful and desirable vehicle fuels. These alcohol fuels and others should be developed and encouraged by the following steps:
2. Removal of the state gas tax on all alcohol portions of fuels sold in Ohio
3. Increased research and pilot projects by Land Grant Universities on the use of alcohol fuels and its spent byproduct; whenever possible these projects should involve family farm operations;
4. Tax advantages for farm use and participation in alcohol fuels development
5. The NFU should use its educational and legislative resources to promote alcohol fuels for farm and public use; in particular, the possibilities of on farm production of alcohol fuels from animal waste
6. Strongly recommends mandating the use of domestic produced ethanol in gasoline fuels sold in Ohio, to range from 15% to 99% blend.
7. Whereas many current production vehicles are now manufactured to accommodate E-85, the OFU recommends that the State of Ohio make available, by legislation if necessary, 85 percent ethanol fuel to all consumers in Ohio.
8. Ohio Farmers Union will work aggressively with all other groups and organizations to promote the education and use of ethanol fuels made from domestic agricultural products.
9. We support introduction of the Incentive for Renewable Energy Sources legislation. We also support the American Soybeans Association's workings to legislate a blenders' tax credit for biodiesel.
10. The State of Ohio should be required to use renewable fuels.
11. E85 Ethanol and bio-diesel fuel should be made easily accessible in the state of Ohio.
12. We oppose allocations of renewable fuels tax credit and support the maintenance of tariffs on imported fuels.
13. We urge that the RFS standards from the 2008 Farm Bill, be fully implemented and fully funded.

2. On-Farm Wind and Solar Energy

The Farmers Union calls upon legislative and administrative leadership in Ohio to join their neighboring states in encouraging renewable fuels through RFP (Renewable Fuels Portfolio) and C-BED (Community Based Energy Development) legislation.

Wind and solar energy, especially passive solar energy, can be economically used on the farm when farmers are provided with technical and educational assistance. The needed technical expertise can be provided by joint efforts of private, state, and federal agencies to tap these potential energy sources on the farm.

G. Pipelines

There continues to be pipeline building pressure in many parts of rural Ohio. In addition to Special Order of Business 2015-04, the Ohio Farmers Union believes the following in relation to private sector pipelines and private property owners:

1. Any ingress or egress to work area across private land be planked with pads the full length of the access road.
2. No above ground structure be placed on cropland being farmed.
3. Only one pipeline per easement.

- 774 4. Soil will be stripped in three layers rather than two; as some trenches will be eight feet
775 deep.
776 5. Compensation will be made on a pipe size and per foot basis instead of per acre.
777 6. Any septic tiles be replaced, and, if a back bed must be installed, the pipeline would bear
778 the cost.
779 7. Any water pumped from trench while installing pipeline will not be piped on top of the
780 ground.
781 8. Any pipeline on easement that would devastate or destroy a business should not be
782 permitted.
783 9. Any drainage tile replacement will be done to the satisfaction of the landowner at the
784 cost of the pipeline company.
785 10. We Urge Ohio to adopt a "Trespass Fee" to compensate private land owners for
786 inconvenience or property damage.
787 (Wyoming and other states use such fees to compensate the state for "use" of their wildlife).

788 **VIII. UTILITIES**

789 **A. Utilities**

790 The Ohio Farmers Union will work aggressively with the Ohio Consumers Counsel to oppose all
791 efforts by any utility, which may take unfair advantage of its consumers. Peak rates for energy
792 should not be applied to small businesses, including agriculture whose operations can't avoid
793 power usage.

794 **B. Rural Electric and Telephone Cooperatives and Companies**

795 We support the Rural Electrification generation and transmission loan program and urge the
796 adequate funding thereof. We urge the continuation of an adequate loan program to insure a
797 dependable supply of low-cost power and telephone service for rural areas. We also recommend
798 that State and Federal governmental regulations should be designed to benefit rural electric and
799 telephone cooperatives.

800 We encourage institution of extended area services where possible. We further urge adoption of
801 a standard overdue charge not to exceed 1 1/2 percent per month throughout the state of Ohio.
802

803 Ohio Farmers Union supports Extended Area Service (EAS) between telephone exchanges that
804 are adjacent to each other. Furthermore, we support local access calling to the county seat.
805

806 OFU supports the availability of broad band internet services to all rural communities.
807

808 Ohio Farmers Union urges companies offering metal-based landline telephone service as of
809 2015 to continue to support these networks in all areas of Ohio until Internet-based telephone
810 service is universally available geographically and compares in cost favorably with traditional
811 landlines.
812

813 **IX. QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL OHIO**

814 **A. Labor Cooperation**

815 We respect the right of other groups with weak bargaining power to organize and bargain to
816 improve their position in the nation's economy.

817 Farmers must have market power balanced with the bargaining power of farm workers and
818 other sectors of the economy.

819 We ask farm labor to understand the hardship of boycotts and of strikes during harvest periods.

820 We seek the cooperation of labor as we strive to strengthen farm bargaining power essential to
821 the welfare of both farm operators and their employees.

822 Any organizing effort should be based on the merit of need, refraining from the use of coercion
823 and the intimidation of outside organizations to try to force an issue.

824 O.F.U. recognizes the opportunities this nation has offered immigrants and we support a strictly
825 supervised immigration program which confers both rights and responsibilities on foreign born
826 residents. These programs must not jeopardize the jobs of domestic workers.

827 **B. Health Care**

828 Tens of millions of Americans are uninsured and underinsured. This is especially bad for those
829 in dangerous occupations such as farming. The combination of lower farm income and
830 increasing health care costs has forced many farm families to choose between feeding their
831 families and providing health insurance.

832 For the long-term, comprehensive reform is needed which will:

- 833 1. Implement cost controls including prescription drugs and eliminate its advertising as a tax
834 deduction and authorize U.S. bulk purchasing of prescription drugs
- 835 2. Reduce fraud and administrative expenses
- 836 3. Encourage preventive care
- 837 4. Provide universal access that is, coverage for all, so that the insured do not pay inflated
838 prices to cover the uninsured
- 839 5. Provide long-term care, including assistance to those who wish to stay in their homes
840 instead of entering a nursing home
- 841 6. Retain the individual's right to choose the doctor and hospital
- 842 7. Support legislation that would allow for comprehensive health care, based on a single payer
843 system, similar to the Medicare program
- 844 8. Encourage reasonable guidelines for hospital expansion

845 Every American has the right to receive appropriate medical attention that can improve our
846 quality of life. O.F.U. members have much at stake in assuring that our health care is available,
847 humane, and affordable. We support preventive medicine programs and see the need for
848 national health care programs both for catastrophic and nursing home coverage. O.F.U. shall
849 continue participation in the State government sponsored efforts to review and direct our health
850 care costs. O.F.U. will work to halt wasteful, inflated or monopolistic pricing practices.

851 Every sector of the health care industry, including users, must do their part to contain the
852 runaway costs of providing these essential services.

853 **C. Social Security, Private Accounts and Medicare**

854 Farmers Union supports the following actions for the social security system:

- 855 1. Ohio Farmers Union supports preserving the integrity of the current social security system.
856 The income cap should be eliminated.
- 857 2. We do not support the privatization of social security but encourage Americans to secure
858 investment accounts outside social security, to supplement their retirements.

- 859 3. The age retirement and survivors' benefit program are financed from contributions made by
860 participants in the Social Security program. The employee payroll deductions, employer
861 contributions and self-employment taxes are placed in a trust fund and can be used for no
862 other public purposes.
- 863 4. Therefore, cutting Social security benefits or limited cost-of-living adjustments will do
864 nothing real to reduce deficits or balance the federal budget. Such benefit reductions will
865 only deprive beneficiaries of payments to which they are entitled.
- 866 5. The Social Security Trust Fund, therefore, should be removed from the unified federal
867 budget, beyond the grasp of enemies of the program.
- 868 6. That all Social Security benefits be equitably computed regardless of the recipient's year of
869 birth.
- 870 7. We oppose any and all reductions in Medicare benefits whether by increased premiums or
871 deductibles.

872 **D. Farm Women and Social Security**

873 It is estimated that over 70 percent of women in farm families actively participate in farm work
874 and management, but they have been discouraged from contributing to their own Social Security
875 coverage. Although they may pay Social Security taxes in off-farm employment, such work is
876 often low-paid and intermittent. They are, therefore denied full retirement, disability and
877 survivor protection.

878 Husbands and wives, sharing a farm enterprise, should have the option to share income credit
879 from Social Security.

880 **E. Employment and Anti-Poverty Efforts**

881 Ohio Farmers Union supports the Green Thumb concept and on the job training programs,
882 which have offered effective employment for low-income rural Ohio citizens. We encourage
883 continuation and funding at a higher level than at present.

884 We ask the Federal Government, Post Office Department and any corporation selling to or
885 receiving benefits from the Federal Government to give priority employment opportunities to a
886 qualified individual or family.

887 **X. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

888 **A. International Trade and Commodity Agreements**

889 Exports of farm commodities should not be restricted. Imported food and fiber products should
890 meet the same standards as applicable to domestic producers, such as sanitation, tolerances of
891 harmful chemicals, and additives. O.F.U. recommends the support of legislation requiring the
892 labeling in conspicuous places of all imported agricultural, food and fiber products sold in retail
893 trade in this country. The final consumer should be provided information on point of origin of
894 imported foods.

895 Our markets should only be open to other exporters if their standards meet those of the United
896 States. All imported agricultural products should be federally inspected prior to admission or
897 entry into the United States. In cases where state inspection standards meet or surpass federal
898 standards, those state inspected agricultural products may be marketed across state lines. The
899 importer shall incur the cost of any import inspections. This would assure a safe food supply for
900 U.S. consumers and put U.S. producers on a level playing field when competing in the global
901 market.

902 Commodity support programs can have their impacts maximized by imposing strictly enforced
903 payment limitations to direct scarce resources toward family sized farms.

904 We propose legislation to outlaw the addition of foreign material into grain for export.

905 We support establishment of quotas and/or duties on imports to protect domestic producers.

906 International agreements should be negotiated with other producing and consuming countries
907 to provide for international cooperation to stabilize prices and supplies of agriculture
908 commodities through the following provisions:

- 909 1. Commitments to assure quality supplies to importing countries; and to assure access to
910 markets for exporting countries;
- 911 2. Cooperation among participating countries to manage the supplies put into the world
912 market;
- 913 3. Consultations between governments on the effects of national price support programs on
914 work trade;
- 915 4. Reserves of food and fiber, under the control of national governments but subject to
916 international review, to assure importing countries of the reliability of exporting countries to
917 meet their supply commitments, and to provide for national and international emergencies;
- 918 5. Political restrictions should not be imposed on trade in agricultural commodities at any time
919 except under conditions specified by law, which, among others, provide for specific
920 measures to ensure that the farmer producers of the commodity concerned will not be
921 adversely affected.
- 922 6. The federal government should engage in negotiations to establish uniformity in currency
923 values.

924 **B. World Trade Organization (WTO)**

- 925 1. WTO agreements should not mandate a decrease in the present benefits to family farmers
926 who participate in the current United States Federal Farm Programs.
- 927 2. WTO rules should include a mechanism to adjust currency values of all countries compared
928 to the U.S. dollar, and not manipulation to benefit countries trading with the U.S. WTO trade
929 agreements should include mechanisms, to enforce uniform minimum labor standards for
930 all nations.
- 931 3. WTO trade agreements should include mechanisms for environmental and food safety for all
932 nations.
- 933 4. WTO trade negotiators should not unilaterally reduce farm subsidy levels unless tied to
934 effective mechanisms to support commodity values.

935 **C. Cuban Trade Embargo**

936 OFU supports the elimination of the Cuban Trade Embargo for the benefit of American livestock
937 producers and to facilitate normalization of relations with Cuba. The Ohio Farmers Union
938 supports the easing of restrictions on travel and remunerations undertaken in 2016. We urge
939 Congress to fully lift the embargo as soon as possible.

940 **XI. GOVERNMENT**

941 **A. Federal**

942 **1. National Food Policy and Parity**

943 The members of the Ohio Farmers Union believe that there is one overriding issue on which the
944 future of family agriculture and the future of our nation's food supply greatly depend; the need
945 for a state and national food policy. Such plans must embody provisions relating to all segments
946 of society as well as farmers.

947 We propose for Farmers Union to make this their primary national objective, that farm
948 production be supported at full parity that provides a family farmer with an adequate return on
949 labor and investment.

950 We, therefore, reaffirm our basic commitment to the parity formula established by law as the
951 standard by which to determine prices for agriculture commodities that are fair to farmers and
952 ranchers and the public.

953 A national food policy should include the following:

- 954 1. Objective; a nutritionally adequate diet for all persons including expanded and adequate
955 food programs. This should include any increased usage of our Government Surplus food
956 stockpiles to help feed the needy and the hungry. We also propose that the nation's first
957 priority would be to feed the hungry, not only in the United States, but worldwide.
- 958 2. Support of the farm credit system to allow farmers to have access to capital investments
959 needed to produce the nation's food and fiber.
- 960 3. Cost sharing conservation programs that will allow farmers to better protect our nation's
961 greatest natural resource; the land.
- 962 4. Involvement of the U.S. in international trade agreements to offer U.S. farmers a constant
963 and fair export market.
- 964 5. Participation by the U.S. in a world grain reserve which will free the world's farmers from
965 the economic stranglehold of fluctuating prices and act as a strategic food supply for
966 emergency distribution.
- 967 6. All food staples should be labeled from the point of origin.

968 **2. USDA Reorganization and Clarification**

969 In the interest of achieving the most efficient USDA possible, all parties associated with farm
970 programs need to look at all options to streamline the Department.

971 The proposed closing of USDA offices alone, based on flawed criteria, will not achieve this goal.
972 Current proposals are irresponsible and would not provide equal access to all farmers. Farmers
973 increasingly rely on off-farm income and would be required to take more time off from these
974 jobs to go to another county.

975 F.S.A. is requiring too much paperwork for commodity loans. Paperwork must be reduced in
976 order to make programs farmer friendly and save tax dollars and resources (trees used for the
977 paper).

978 In addition, all agriculture representatives must practice better public relations in order to
979 regain support for farm programs. For example, a USDA official or farmer or farmer
980 representative when speaking on farm programs should not use the word "subsidy". This word
981 is misleading and implies something for nothing.

982 If reducing the costs of government farm programs is this nation's objective, then it should
983 implement policies to strengthen commodity prices at the market, which would in turn, reduce
984 government costs for farm programs.

985 We support the continuance of the farmer elected committee system for FSA, rather than
986 appointments of committee persons.

987 **3. Improve Bargaining Power**

988 The federal government price support and supply management programs, when they are
989 designed to help farmers to prevent over supply of particular commodities, can afford a basic
990 framework of protection for farmers in the marketplace. However, even when the supply and
991 demand of farm products are in relatively good balance, the weak bargaining position of farmers
992 in the market prevents them from obtaining fair prices and income. Farmers need additional
993 and improved mechanisms and institutions for direct and positive influence in the marketplace.

994 In the quest for greater farm unity, Ohio Farmers Union recommends its members to support
995 the collective bargaining effort of the National Farmers Organization provided for under the
996 Capper Volstead Act of 1922 which allows farmers to:

- 997 1. To negotiate collectively for fair prices;
- 998 2. To require handlers to negotiate in good faith;
- 999 3. To set minimum prices of at least full parity if negotiations fail or handlers refuse to
1000 negotiate;
- 1001 4. To levy penalties upon those who sell below the set minimum;
- 1002 5. To prevent handlers and processors from direct ownership of production facilities and
1003 obtaining alternative sources of supply through their own food production enterprises or
1004 imports;
- 1005 6. To apply marketing quotas subject to the majority approval of producers;
- 1006 7. To authorize production control where approved through producer referendum;
- 1007 8. We support national bargaining legislation that will comply with the policy of the Ohio
1008 Farmers Union.
- 1009 9. We support implementation of USDA Grain Inspectors and Packers and Stockyard
1010 Administration (GIPSA) proposed rule revisions.

1011 **B. State**

1012 **1. State Food Policy and Parity**

1013 The need for International Grain agreements to control production and set minimum floor
1014 prices for our exports at an adequate level. The Director of Agriculture and the Government of
1015 Ohio should assume the leadership in developing a food plan for Ohio.

1016

1017 Ohio's food plan should include the following goals:

- 1018 1. A nutritionally adequate diet for all Ohioans
- 1019 2. Strengthening the family farm and farming communities
- 1020 3. The conservation of soil and water resources
- 1021 4. Economic justice for farmers and farm workers
- 1022 5. The preservation of prime agricultural land
- 1023 6. Gives preference to Ohio raised agricultural products to be used in all schools and
1024 government food programs (school lunches, meals on wheels, etc.).

1025 7. Promote the development of local market distribution and marketing systems, including
1026 incorporation of the ‘Real Food Challenge’, which would commit the food service systems of
1027 major state institutions like Ohio State University to source 20 percent of their food from
1028 local, sustainable and humanely raised food.

2. Ohio Dept. of Agriculture

1029 The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) should be a promoter of family farming in Ohio, not
1030 only agribusiness. Continued improvement efforts to the ODA must be coupled with a close
1031 working relationship between OFU and family farmer-oriented groups.
1032

3. Campaign Finance Reform

1033 In order to protect our governmental bodies from the abuse of money, the Ohio Farmers Union
1034 favors the adoption of a public elections financing system, or strict campaign finance reform.
1035 We oppose the pay to play atmosphere created when individuals and Political Action
1036 Committees donate substantial amounts of money to a candidate, Political Party, Party Caucus,
1037 or another PAC. We also believe it is wrong when candidates use the money they have raised to
1038 fund other candidates, parties, caucuses, and PACS.
1039

1040 We call for the repeal of the “Citizens United” Supreme Court Ruling that ruled corporations
1041 have the same right of free speech to contribute unlimited amounts of money toward elections
1042 that skew political outcomes. We believe that money is not equal to speech and that
1043 corporations do not enjoy the same rights as people.

4. Elections

1044 Whereas the American democratic process has been degraded by the influx of hundreds of
1045 millions of dollars to influence the outcome;
1046

1047 The Ohio Farmers Union supports measures to insulate potentially corrupting influences of
1048 campaign contributions and also supports the requirement of a voting system verifiable by
1049 manual audit.

1050 The Ohio Farmers Union is a Legislative Organization. In order to operate our government, we
1051 must have elections that encourage eligible citizens to register and vote. We must make
1052 registration and voting convenient for all. We oppose any reduction in the present voting hours.

1053 We support voter-education programs in K-12 grade classrooms, for example, Kids voting USA.
1054 The end results are to establish a voting tradition in today’s youth and help remind adults of
1055 their civic responsibilities.

1056 OFU recommends that voter registration be encouraged at high school levels for graduation.

1057 We support establishing an impartial procedure for drawing the boundaries of Congressional
1058 and Ohio General Assembly districts. Any statewide office holder (auditor, attorney general,
1059 secretary of state and treasurer) must be out of office one term (4 years) before running for a
1060 state office, except for governor.

1061 We support requiring multiple candidates for any elected position.

5. Eminent Domain

1062 Every effort shall be made to preserve farmer ownership. In all public and private projects where
1063 eminent domain proceedings may eventually be used, individual notification and public
1064 hearings should be held before the project is allowed implementation. Eminent domain shall be
1065

1066 negotiated between property owner and utility to include yearly royalty fees to be paid to the
1067 owner. Severance damages should include payment for the diminution of remaining land values
1068 and increased expenses and inconvenience suffered by affected landowners and operators. All
1069 initial court expenses, including attorney and appraiser fees, should be borne by the
1070 constructing agency in condemnation proceedings. We urge investigation into how the State of
1071 Ohio classifies the purchase of these lands for state and federal tax purposes. Ohio Farmers
1072 Union believes the tax purpose should always be in the best interest of the seller. Eminent
1073 Domain shall not be used to benefit a for profit company, or by one entity to benefit another.
1074 Owners should be compensated no less than three times the appraised value and relocation
1075 expenses.

1076 OFU opposes the use of Eminent Domain to seize private property for any private “for profit”
1077 development projects.

1078 The original owner of the land should have the right to repurchase the land if it is not developed.

1079 **6. *Opposition to Combining Some State Agencies***

1080 OFU opposes combining the Ohio departments of Agriculture, Environmental Protection
1081 Agency and Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources.

1082 **7. *Support for Local Food Advisory Councils in Ohio***

1083 In 2008 Ohioans spent \$35 billion on food - only about 1% of that stayed in Ohio (ODA). By
1084 localizing food spending, Ohio can create wealth and new job opportunities. Encouraging the
1085 growth of local food marketed in Ohio can increase income to farmers and make job
1086 opportunities in farming more attractive. A growing local food sector can also slow the
1087 conversion of farmland, thereby protecting valuable farmland and water resources. Localizing
1088 food spending has many other benefits, including providing fresh high-quality food to Ohioans.
1089 For this localized marketing to happen, there must be deliberate decisions made by the private
1090 and public sectors. One of the ways this has happened in Ohio is through the work of the Local
1091 Food Advisory Councils.

1092 Ohio Farmers Union supports the work of the Local Food Advisory Councils and will cooperate
1093 with them to further our mutual interests.

1094

1095 **8. *Funding Claims Under Ohio’s Predator Law***

1096 The Ohio Revised Code, Section 955.51, specifies a provision under the law to pay animal owners
1097 for the loss of animals at the fair market value indemnity for those animals killed by coyotes and
1098 black vultures. However, the Ohio General Assembly, since 2009, has not provided funding for
1099 the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture to pay for such losses.

1100

1101 Because of this, the Ohio Farmers Union should work with the Ohio General Assembly to
1102 appropriate funding in the amount needed for payment of these claims under Ohio law.
1103

1104 **XII. INSURANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND LIABILITY**

1105 **A. State**

1106 **1. Workers Compensation Insurance**

1107 We recommend the farmer employers who employ farm family members to work on the farm be
1108 exempt from all mandatory coverage under Worker's Compensation Law, similar to "family
1109 farm corporation."

1110 The Ohio Farmers Union recommends to the Governor and General Assembly to attempt to
1111 make the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation to meet the needs of employers and
1112 employees. We urge careful consideration on all matters including privatization in such an
1113 attempt.

1114 As the Ohio General Assembly once again attempts to introduce and pass reforms in the state's
1115 workers' compensation system, Ohio Farmers Union restates its position that such reforms must
1116 not allow exemptions to mega farms. Also, documentation on employers from the state's
1117 Division of Safety and Hygiene must remain open to the public in order to prevent abuses by
1118 mega farm operators.

1119 Ohio Farmers Union favors the reduction and elimination of waste and fraud associated with
1120 workers' compensation, and all workers' compensation related investment funds. Ohio's
1121 auditor, treasurer, attorney general, and governor should assure that funds are properly
1122 invested and managed to safeguard the interest of employers and employees; however, any
1123 attempts at reforming the workers' compensation system must not take away legitimate
1124 protection and rights to workers.

1125 **2. Vehicle Liability**

1126 The public should be protected from uninsured motorists. Owners must show proof of insurance
1127 before the vehicle is registered.

1128 **3. Premises Liability**

1129 We support legislation that would limit the legal liability (both civil and criminal) of private
1130 property owners in respect to thieves, vandals, and all uninvited persons who trespass on the
1131 private owner's land.

1132 The membership petitions the Ohio Farmers Union to seek responsible sponsorship to
1133 introduce legislation to remove Ohio farmers from liability by persons who receive injury while
1134 trespassing upon land with criminal intent.

1135 **4. Liability of Manufacturers**

1136 Since agriculture involves the use of many machines, chemicals, and other potentially dangerous
1137 products, we would oppose any abolition of a farmer's rights to seek redress in a court of law for
1138 damages or personal injury as a result of an unsafe or dangerous product. Family farmers have
1139 the right to expect accountability from all who manufacture the tools and products used in
1140 agriculture. Any infringement on this right to a "day in court" is to accept less than justice for
1141 farmers and all consumers.

1142 **XIII. JUDICIAL**

1143 **A. Monopolies**

1144 Antitrust laws should be investigated as to why they are not being enforced as they pertain to
1145 agriculture. The department of Justice's antitrust division should restore investigations of
1146 antitrust behavior and be fully funded and staffed.

1147 **XIV. CHECKOFFS AND COMMODITY GROUPS**

1148 **A. Checkoff Programs**

1149 The Ohio Farmers Union understands that check off programs for agricultural commodities
1150 were designed to create a funding method to further the promotion, education, and research of
1151 such commodities. It was believed that check off programs would ultimately create more
1152 demand for the products and therefore improve prices received for those products.

1153 Significant time has elapsed to allow farmers to see the result of check off programs in the form
1154 of improved prices. Consequently, there has been no evidence that proves check off programs
1155 have directly resulted in a higher standard of prices received. Therefore, Ohio Farmers Union,
1156 knowing check off programs may not be prohibited in the near future, support a farmer's choice
1157 in participation in check off programs.

1158 **B. Checkoff Operations**

1159 All funds collected in check off programs should serve their intended purpose and should, under
1160 criminal penalties, be enforced by the appropriate government agencies, are prohibited from
1161 misuse for political or lobbying efforts, operation of a commodity organization, as well as
1162 personal gain.

1163 The Ohio Farmers Union strongly opposes the current refund procedures in which check off
1164 funds are automatically deducted at the time of sale and is the producers' responsibility to
1165 request a refund. We support immediate change in the provision that allows a producer to
1166 abstain from the check off at the time of sale.

1167 If a crop commodity checkoff is requested and a referendum is held, we request the Farm
1168 Service Agency (F.S.A.) to conduct these referendums. F.S.A. has verified acreage counts on
1169 appropriate commodities, as well as all recognized producers, which enables a more accurate
1170 and democratic measure of farmer's participation in the referendum.

1171 O.F.U. is also supportive of funding for alternative livestock and crop research

1172 The Ohio Farmers Union calls for the approved check off operation committee to have at least
1173 one member appointed by the Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture from each of the
1174 four most numerous general farm organizations and one additional farmer. This operating
1175 committee should be required to resubmit the check off program to the participating producer
1176 for his or her approval every five years. If the approval for continuation fails, the commodity
1177 promotion group cannot resubmit any plan for three years.

1178 **C. Checkoff Nominations**

1179 The Ohio Farmers Union recommends amending criteria to allow all national general farm
1180 organizations to submit nominees to check off boards. We feel the current criterion adds to
1181 narrow philosophy and ideology.

1182 Producers of the various farm commodities are interdependent on each other. The philosophies
1183 of the different general farm organizations shall be represented in order to reflect the diverse
1184 philosophies of producers in the way the mandatory check off dollars are spent.

1185 **XV. EDUCATION**

1186 **A. Land, Sea Grant Colleges**

1187 The Ohio Farmers Union should take action to ensure that the policies and recommendations of
1188 The Ohio State University (OSU) College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and
1189 the OSU Extension service shall serve the best interests of family farmers.

1190 The Ohio State University College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences economist
1191 should support, and encourage Federal Farm Programs that benefit family farmers.

1192 Consumers need to know, that thanks to the hard work and efficiency of the American farmer,
1193 coupled with our comprehensive food security policy, the percent of disposable income spent on
1194 food in the United States is only 10 percent-less than anywhere else in the world. On the
1195 average, farmers receive less than 10 percent of consumer expenditures for food and that
1196 amount is shrinking every year to the point where farmers cannot financially survive. It should
1197 be the responsibility and desire of our land grant university to inform consumers that this
1198 situation is not sustainable for farmers, and our food distribution and marketing system.

1199 The Ohio Farmers Union should monitor farm projects and programs conducted by the Ohio
1200 land grant colleges. Farmers Union should work to guarantee that Ohio Land Grant College's
1201 research and demonstrations aid the family farm with technology and practices appropriate to
1202 the goal of stewardship. Our land grant universities shall do more research into value-added
1203 production and marketing by family farmers and less encouragement of expansion for
1204 expansion's sake.

1205 **B. Ohio State and County Fairs**

1206 We call upon the Governor of Ohio and the Ohio General Assembly to adequately fund the Ohio
1207 State Fair, Ohio Expo Center, and Junior Fair Program.

1208 O.F.U. opposes any fees for Junior Fair participation to the Ohio State Fair and county fairs.

1209 We support continued adequate state funding for FFA and 4 H. and Home Economics, including
1210 county extension agents

1211 **XVI. FARMERS UNION ORGANIZATION**

1212 **A. Membership**

1213 These adverse times for family agriculture have caused a need and a desire for rural family farm
1214 people to unite.

1215 Farmers Union urges its members and organization to:

- 1216 1. Establish a yearly membership goal within each county or local;
- 1217 2. Have concentrated membership drives in each organized county to raise the projected goal
1218 as per the guidelines established by the State and County Organization Director. Each
1219 Farmers Union member should add at least one new member per year. Set a date for good
1220 neighbor policy.
- 1221 3. Have at least two meetings in each county annually with all members being notified by mail.

- 1222 4. Have all county and/or local Executive Teams meet a minimum of one time each quarter.
1223 5. Encourage younger members to get involved in working to achieve the goals of the
1224 organization.

B. Communication and Information

1225 Success can only be accomplished through a well-informed membership. To improve
1226 information and communication, we urge the following:
1227

- 1228 1. To better inform our membership, the State organization should continue to publish the bi-
1229 monthly Ohio Country Messenger newspaper and additional publications be distributed as
1230 widely as possible to include all presidents of FFA and young farmer groups.
1231 2. The voting records of legislators (State and Federal) pertaining to Farmers Union policy
1232 matters should be published in Farmers Union publications. Candidates should be judged
1233 on the basis of their support of Farmers Union policy. We urge each individual member to
1234 exercise his freedom of speech and write to his or her lawmakers on an individual basis.
1235 3. Each Farmers Union organization should appoint representatives to work closely with the
1236 news media in publicizing Farmers Union activity.
1237 4. Notices should be placed in local newspapers when a membership drive is conducted.
1238 5. The organization should emphasize the need to educate and to inform the public.
1239 6. We encourage our members to study the various farm organizations and to cooperate with
1240 them when it would be in the best interest of the farmer.
1241 7. Ohio Farmers Union will continually gather information from the Ohio Farm Service Agency
1242 Committee concerning financial benefits available for conservation practices and publish
1243 them in the Ohio Country Messenger.

C. Youth Programs

1244 All county organizations are urged to promote state youth programs and the state organization
1245 will provide sufficient support to counties to implement promotions of such programs.
1246

1247 Youth should actively participate in their county organization.

D. Local Programs

1248 We urge all counties to participate in local issues. County groups should take a position on
1249 national issues and pass the same on to state officials.
1250

E. Legislation

1251 O.F.U. should continue to work with each county legislative director to more effectively involve
1252 each county organization in our legislative efforts in the State House. Only county participation
1253 can ensure a successful program.
1254

1255 O.F.U. should conduct workshops for county leaders and legislative directors. The workshops
1256 should be supported by each county organization to ensure their success in developing a well
1257 informed and participating membership.

F. Political Action Committee

1258 Farmers have never had a greater need for a Political Action Committee. The O.F.U. volunteer
1259 bipartisan Political Action Committee (FarmPac) should be supported by every O.F.U. member.
1260 We urge all members to join FarmPac and contribute each year to the committee.
1261

1262

