

**Missouri Farmers Union
Policy Statement**

MISSION STATEMENT

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

VISION STATEMENT

To grow membership so that MFU is heard throughout Missouri and positively impacts state and federal policy.

PREAMBLE

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

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

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

We believe economic and social prosperity is best achieved with an independently owned family farm system as the foundation for healthy rural communities and proper stewardship of all natural resources.

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

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

FOUNDATIONS OF A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE POLICY

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

We support:

- Access to the resources necessary for the continuation of sustainable family farms, to include land, seed, livestock, nutrients, fair markets, clean air and water, healthy soils, resilient local communities, and access to appropriate publicly available research and technology
- Adequate, resilient, safe, and local and regional food supply systems for all people
- Building links between family farm producers, and consumers
- Enhancing the potential for profitability through appropriate legislative and regulatory mechanisms while maintaining the integrity of state and federal constitutions
- Directing farm program benefits toward family farming operations
- Allowing planting flexibility for farmers and ranchers
- Promoting adequate land stewardship and conservation practices
- Enabling producers to derive farm income from the market place
- Providing an adequate economic safety net
- Promoting food and farm programs and policies that support producers of livestock, pollinator and specialty crops
- Including livestock, pollinators and specialty crop in insurance, production and revenue loss payments
- Promoting effective supply management programs
- Promoting secure and sustainable food systems that minimize waste and maximize nutrition
- Promoting programs that stimulate the entrance of young and beginning farmers into family farming
- Encouraging FSA County committees to appoint and/or elect a beginning or underserved farmer as well as a military veteran to their local committees
- Protecting the traditional and historical right of farmers to save their own plant and animal life for reproduction

AGRICULTURAL LABOR

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

We support:

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

We oppose:

- Revisions to rules regarding family members under age 16 and 18 performing various on-farm jobs

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) create a series of ethical, environmental, food safety, legal, market, and structural issues that impact everyone in the food chain.

We support:

- Restricting the release of new biotechnology-based products predicated on the "precautionary principle" and release only those products that have proven beneficial effects for family farmers, consumers and the environment
- Increased monitoring and surveillance by government regulatory agencies over biotechnology
- Maintaining genetic biodiversity and the integrity of the gene pool
- Mandatory labeling that lists specific types of GMOs in a product
- Legislation to exempt farmers from paying patent royalties on farm animals and technical fees on seeds which have been genetically modified
- Legislation to prohibit the patenting of heritage seed, animal and biological genetics
- Legislation to prohibit the use of genetic restriction technology for the sole purpose of protecting private sector innovations
- Legislation to prohibit the development and selling of seed that is sterile
- Ensuring the right of farmers to save seed from all on-farm agricultural products
- Requiring new products involving GMOs to be certified as safe by the FDA in testing done independently of the patent holder, and before being allowed on the market. Testing is to be done at the expense of the specific patent holders seeking to market such products
- Legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be held strictly liable for damages caused by genetic trespass including safety, health, economic and environmental problems, and cross pollination
- Requiring patent holders to maintain federal registration after the expiration of the patent and allow generic use
- Requiring technology fees to be fully revealed
- Guaranteeing the performance of any agricultural product with a technology fee
- Congressional action to regulate the biotech industry's technology agreements
- Settlement of technology grievances, by a jury of peers, in the home state of the farmer and not the state of the biotech corporation
- Reimbursement of farmers for any damages caused by lower prices, lost markets or genetic contamination, including legal fees, by the company producing the genetically engineered organism
- Legislation that protects family farmers from liability and awards them real and punitive damages resulting from biotechnology contamination due to industry negligence
- Classification of CRISPR as genetic modification
- Strong and effective regulation to avoid unapproved release of genetically modified germplasm
- Promoting non-GM production to resolve trade disputes involving GM products

We oppose:

- The release of biotechnology that has not been FDA approved for human consumption or that is detrimental to the export market
- The release of GMO plant varieties or hybrids before they are approved for distribution through all major U.S. export markets
- Genetically modifying crops to withstand 2, 4-D

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION

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

Agriculture's role in soil and water conservation, air quality and the proper management and stewardship of all resources should be promoted and include clean air initiatives, conservation and natural resource management. Continued research and analysis are essential to better understand the current impacts, as well as, the long-range effects of ongoing climate change. Immediate implementation of policies, programs, practices, and strategies to effectively manage, mitigate and stop climate change must be enacted at all levels of government, by the private sector and within local communities. MFU supports farmers, ranchers and all producers doing their part to employ practices and support policies that will stem the tide of negative climate impacts and change.

We support:

- Farmer and rancher consultation at all levels of government and public policy, as the U.S. moves to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and create better conservation and farming practices
- Compensating farmers that have previously implemented climate friendly practices
- Increase funding for USDA voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs, and other federal and state efforts to encourage climate friendly agricultural practices
- Carbon sequestration by agricultural producers
- Creating USDA guidelines for environmental credit markets
- Enhancing research on effective methods for agricultural carbon sequestration
- Implementation of green payments to agricultural producers for carbon sequestration as an agricultural conservation practice that protects the environment and enhances income for farmers through carbon credits
- Research on agricultural practices to clearly identify those contributing to further global warming and those that would mitigate and reduce greenhouse gasses and climate change
- The development of multi-use crops

CONCENTRATION

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

We support:

- A moratorium on approval of mega-agribusiness mergers
- Voluntary conservation and renewable energy programs
- Breaking-up the monopolies in seed, pesticide, meat, milk, and egg components of agricultural industries
- Fair markets and a competitive marketplace for family farmers, ranchers and consumers through improved interpretation and enforcement of the Packers and Stockyard (P&S) Act of 1921
- Congress providing adequate funding for anti-trust and P&S enforcement
- Preventing any company or cooperative, including farmer-owned coops, from requiring farmers to accept bundled grain and livestock input sources;
- Legislation that establishes a threshold level of concentration that is used as proof of antitrust violation
- Legislation to amend the Clayton Antitrust Act to make it clear that a person who suffers direct or indirect harm can recover damages for any anti-competitive practice
- Promotion and enforcement of anti-trust remedies that prevent concentration on the global level for companies doing business in the U.S
- Price transparency and mandatory price reporting

We oppose:

- Joint ventures or mergers between cooperative lenders and multi-national corporations

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

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

We support:

- Family farmers conserving and preserving our water in their farming practices and in their rural communities
- Assisting family farmers in the mitigation of agricultural runoff in ways that lower levels of nitrates and pesticides in farm land runoff and that reduces erosion through the use of cover crops, no-till, site specific applications of farm chemicals, and conservation practices
- Assisting family farmers at the local, state and federal levels with policy and regulatory tools in the mitigation of agricultural runoff
- Clean air and water regulations and rules, which are important to the protection of human health, environmental quality and the quality and quantity of food production
- Enforcement of regulations and rules in ways that both protect and benefit Missouri's family farmers and all people

CONSERVATION

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

We support:

- Participation by family farmers and family farm advocates on the State Technical Committee
- Targeting of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) payments to small and medium sized farms and ranches
- Making all farm and ranch programs readily and easily accessible by family farmers and ranchers
- Use of CRP land for responsible haying and grazing
- Statewide programs that promote and assist sustainable agriculture
- Initiating a collaborative effort to develop an effective and balanced policy for the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers
- Flood control as the number one priority of river management
- Enforcement of “tolerable soil loss” not to exceed 2T (T-value; as determined by NRCS) in order to receive crop insurance
- A Conservation Reserve Program that strengthens family farms, ranches and rural communities

CONTRACTS

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

We support:

- Policies that protect the rights of farmers who engage in contract agriculture
- Updating, clarifying, and enforcing Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) rules
- Rights of contract-livestock farmers under GIPSA
- Policy that protects seed purchasers from contract liabilities
- USDA and the Dept. of Justice publicly post contracts for commodities and livestock including poultry and private marketing agreements
- Establishing a legal defense fund to support independent family farmers and producers engaged in contract agriculture and/or utilizing patented agricultural inputs funded by a check-off on large-scale integrators and gene patent holders
- Agricultural fair practices through federal bargaining legislation
- Fair trials before a jury of peers rather than mandated arbitration
- Fair and adequate compensation when a company and/or contractor cancels a contract through no fault of the producer

We oppose:

- Contracts that allow a company to terminate a contract without cost-share in the loss to the farmer

COOPERATIVES

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

We support:

- Co-op owners/members to providing the education, leadership and management necessary to effectively run local co-ops

- Organization and growth of community credit unions as an effective means of rural reinvestment and re-vitalization
- Increased access to capital for community-based cooperatives and other farmer-controlled entities that engage in value-added activity that sustains Missouri farm families and rural communities
- Development of broadband communication cooperatives that would provide the opportunity for access by all rural residents
- Formation of value-added cooperative efforts that are formed for the welfare of the local community, that are producer owned, controlled through democratic processes and leadership, and whose business affairs are responsive to and for the benefit of all its members

We oppose:

- Involvement in production agriculture in ways that put co-ops in adverse competition with their family farmer/producer owners

CROP INSURANCE

Crop insurance is a major component of the Farm Bill and will be scrutinized in the development of the prospective 2024 Farm Bill.

We support:

- Payment limitations that focus on regionally-based, family-sized farms

DAIRY

Dairy prices should sustain viable family farms.

We support:

- Regional milk marketing compacts
- Developing a new basic formula for pricing (BFP) milk
- Establishing a parity pricing system combined with supply management
- Establishing, through BFP, a floor price that applies to all classes of milk
- Mandatory dairy price reporting with independent verification
- Measurement of dairy policy fairness by its ability to:
 - o Produce reasonable profit for producers
 - o Provide a high-quality, stable supply for consumers
 - o Promote sustainable environmental practices
 - o Enable producers to enter and exit farming
- Elimination of exclusivity practices by contract buyers toward dairy producers
- Farmer and retailer rights to label milk BST free, non-GMO fed, pasture fed/access and other product descriptors that enable the consumers' right to know

We oppose:

- State of Missouri providing tax incentives to out of state dairy conglomerates
- Establishing large, industrialized dairies in Missouri that compete with local dairy farmers
- Provisions for distant pooling and de-pooling of milk, which allow out-of-state production to distort local markets
- Cooperatives paying members less than a federal minimum price

ECONOMIC AND TAX POLICY

Credit**We support:**

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

Loans:

- Reassess direct farm lending through loans and loan guarantees that protect against volatile predatory interest rates
- Increase Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan rates so that they are closer to the cost of production as an alternative or supplement to commercial borrowing, and pay farmers the same storage rate on long-term reserves as that paid for commercial storage

Markets:

- Protect the agricultural sector from undue harm due to trade conflicts.

Estate Tax

- Support an estate tax structure that enables and promotes the transfer of family farms to the next generation
- Oppose a repeal of estate tax

Taxes**We support:**

- A more equitable, progressive, and sustainable federal and state tax structures that allow the majority of people to pay less and those with the very highest incomes to pay their fair share
- A tax system that fairly and adequately provides revenues for the programs and services that are essential to good governance and the general welfare
- A tax structure that provides a reasonable balance of income, property, and sales tax revenues and in doing so mitigates the growing burden of real and personal property taxes for resident family farmers.
- Full deductibility for individual payment of premiums for health care, long-term care, and disability
- Elimination of state sales taxes on food sold as groceries
- Sales tax exemption for family farmer owned trailers used for agricultural purposes by family farmers
- Provisions in the tax code that reduce concentrations of wealth and power, and promote equality of economic opportunity
- A refundable federal and state earned income tax credit that allows the working poor to keep more of their earned income
- Candidates for federal office releasing their federal tax information

1031 Exchanges**We support:**

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

ENERGY

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

We support:

- Development of open-market, community-based, sustainable, alternative, and renewable fuel and energy production systems
- Research and utilization of alternative sources of energy - to include wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, bio-diesel, hybrid technology, innovative battery technology and other alternative fuel sources
- Labeling of all fuel products containing ethanol
- Creating a pathway to high octane, low carbon fuel
- Eliminating barriers to year-round higher-blended ethanol and advanced biofuels
- Establish refueling stations for alternative fuels i.e. E85 stations, bio-diesel capabilities at truck stops and card stations, and blender pumps
- Energy conservation
- Rural electrical cooperatives to provide utility service to new customers and local communities in areas in which they currently are prohibited due to population increase caps
- Net metering of utilities that target and benefit individual rate payers and family farmers
- Government assistance for green energy programs to family farmers and community-based local businesses Education, research and development for production of cellulosic energy sources
- Regulation of utility companies
- Access to dependable, consistent, affordable, sustainable utilities for all rural areas
- Renewable Fuels Standard, (e.g., 20% sustainable and renewable by the year 2026)
- Open market net metering other incentives that focus on the production of community-based, locally owned, renewable energy such as cellulosic, wind, solar, geothermal and biomass
- Federal and state efforts to support on-farm energy production
- Farm stored Strategic Renewable Energy Reserve, dedicated to the storage and production of community-based energy feedstocks to ensure a dependable long-term, uninterrupted supply of these raw materials
- Uniform state-wide taxation of renewable energy systems, established by the State Tax Commission, and based on project cost
- Wind and solar energy for their conservation, economic, and environmental protection on farms as well as for the alternative revenue streams and energy cost savings they offer for family farms.
- The development of multi-use crops

We oppose:

- Family farm renewable energy systems taxed as corporate and/or public utilities
- Fracking in the state of Missouri

FOOD SECURITY AND SAFETY

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

We support:

- Elimination of poverty and hunger
- Eliminating any ban from food benefit programs for people with criminal records
- Providing consumers with an adequate, high quality, safe food supply
- Decentralization of the food production, distribution and supply
- Food sovereignty for individual countries
- Missouri-local food, fiber and energy production
- Expanded education, communication and access for food assistance programs (e.g., SNAP, food pantries, free lunches, etc.)
- Ways to reduce food waste and loss
- Incentivizing donation of commodity food products through Parity-gifting write-off program(s)

We oppose:

- Missouri tax revenue and/or public institutions from supporting or subsidizing any industrialized food, fiber or energy exports from any non-Missouri corporation using Missouri land and resources
- Unnecessary food waste

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Immigration is a national issue and should be addressed at the federal level. The federal immigration system must be flexible enough to address the needs of businesses while protecting the interests of workers and keeping families together.

We support:

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND AGREEMENTS

We believe all international trade agreements should be based on principles of fair trade. Future trade agreements should not be encouraged until issues of past agreements that have resulted in adverse impacts for Missouri family farmers are resolved. It is crucial to

fair trade negotiations that imported products adhere to standards found in the U.S. with respect to production, product quality, worker safety, environmental protection, consumer safety and public liability.

We support:

- Fair trade agreements that address appropriate health, labor, environmental and safety standards
- Trade policy that benefits the domestic producer as a priority issue
- Utilize agricultural exports to enhance family farmer and rancher price and income
- The application of Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) standards to all imported products in the same manner they are applied to U.S. products
- Hallmarks of US trade policy and agreements are transparency, inclusion of farm workers and consumers in the planning and decision-making processes, inclusion of safeguards related to the quality, sanitation and purity of products, as well as, strong and enforceable protections for the environment, American jobs, workers and consumers around the world.

We oppose:

- World trade agreements that are not beneficial to small and family farms

QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL MISSOURI

Health Care

We strongly affirm the right of all Americans to have readily accessible, comprehensive, affordable, quality health care. Access to health care services is sorely deficient in rural areas of the state. Obtaining health care services is especially difficult for the rural elderly who can no longer drive and live in those areas where public and affordable transportation services do not exist. Family farmers notably are lacking in health care coverage. Being in an occupation considered more dangerous makes the need for health care imperative.

Comprehensive health care should include:

- Access to universal single-payer health care
- More accessible emergency services for rural residents
- The elimination of healthcare networks
- Publicly provided health care for all children 0 to 18 years of age
- Elimination of control by insurance companies over prescription drugs
- Removal of the so called, “donut hole”
- Full coverage for all prescription drugs
- Continued expansion of Medicaid in Missouri as allowed in the ACA
- Subscription drug prices based on Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved rates.
- Funding to cover inflation increases for reimbursement to physicians so as to avoid out-of-pocket costs to the patient

High Speed Internet Service in Rural Missouri

Access to internet services is crucial to the success of family farming in Missouri.

Federal and state government should:

- Ensure development of hard wired and wireless internet access throughout rural Missouri through tax incentives and grants from federal and state government initiatives

Control of Farm Equipment

Manufacturers of modern equipment prevent farmers that own their equipment from repairing or modifying the equipment, and controlling the data collected by the equipment. This results in costly repairs and extended down-time. Federal and state government should:

- Crack down on restrictions that prevent farmers and independent mechanics from making repairs and modifications to their own equipment
- Manufacturers should be required to disclose how they use and share data collected by equipment they sell.

Freedom and Liberties

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

We support:

- Freedom of speech
- Every citizen has a right to know where their food came from, how and under what conditions it was produced
- Adequate transparency, whistleblowers, to include photographs, writing, and investigative reporting
- The right of individual privacy balanced by the public's right to know
- Laws, policies and regulations that equally protect the rights of all family farms
- Use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) for agricultural purposes only after landowner approval
- Opening up the National Airspace System to allow drones for agricultural purposes
- Missouri citizens opposition to Right-to-Work legislation, and further, the Missouri General Assembly should not negate the will of the people.

We oppose:

- Contract growers being subject to mandatory arbitration and non-disclosure of disputes.
- The use of drones for covert surveillance of agricultural operations not in the public interest

Information Collection and Protection

We support the collection and use of detailed field data in a manner that:

- Protects the privacy of Personally Identifiable Information
- Avoids consolidation of market power
- Maintains competition
- Prevents market manipulation
- Protects ownership of data

LABELING**Country-of-Origin**

We believe consumers should have the information necessary to make informed decisions about the origins of their food, and that laws should support farmers and consumers in achieving that goal. While truthful and accurate voluntary labels are important to producers and helpful for consumers, they are not a replacement or substitute for mandatory regulated labeling.

We support:

- Mandatory country of origin labeling for all food products
- A voluntary label that preserves the identification of a product of the U.S.A.
- Allowing consumers to make informed food choices through adequate product labeling
- Label “Product of the U.S.” only those products 100% produced, born, raised and processed inside the U.S.
- Ensure products coming into the U.S. are not being minimally processed and/or blended inside the U.S., thus making them eligible to obtain a “USDA Inspected” label and to be marketed as a U.S. product.
- Product of the U.S.A. and Consumer Transparency rules

Attribution

- Oppose and protest co-optation of the terms sustainable agriculture, family farm, organic, natural and green by corporations for marketing purposes.

LIVESTOCK**We support:**

- Strengthening the Packers and Stockyards Act and Anti-trust laws
- The Secretary of Agriculture enforcing the Packers & Stockyards laws
- A ban on packer ownership of livestock feeding operations, including corporate ownership or corporate financing of non-farmer owned operations
- Congress supplying adequate funding for family farm based agricultural programs
- The development of local and regional livestock processing facilities that enhance the profitability of independent producers through open and competitive bidding
- A meat inspection, grading, and labeling system that protects food safety and quality, and the integrity of the family farm food system
- The right of processors to access domestic and international markets that demand source-verified or BSE-tested livestock
- Anti-trust legislation to limit the market-share percentage of captive supplies
- Fair and thorough inspection and regulation of pet breeders throughout the nation
- Preceding any rule change in the USDA Animal Welfare Act with an appropriate comment period and only then record it in the Federal Register
- Teaching animal welfare through educational programs and agricultural organizations
- Humane treatment of all animals
- Providing all domesticated animals with proper food, shelter and water for survival

- USDA inspected humane harvesting of livestock including horses for meat markets, and
- Stringent federal and state oversight and regulation of “animal disease research laboratories,” and that subject small and local communities to environmental and public health consequences of dangerous pathogens. Of particular concern are areas of significant livestock production and small and local communities, which could be devastated by a breach of quarantine and security
- Current effective state-by-state systems that are in place to identify animal disease and provide traceability
- U.S. Border Safeguards to Domestic Livestock Health and Safety
- Allowing only beef from animals under 30 months of age to enter from any nation where a case of BSE has been confirmed;
- Promoting USDA policies and procedures that protect US borders from penetration by foreign and contagious diseases maintaining the health and integrity of the US livestock industry
- USDA advocating for US livestock producers and not the international marketplace
- USDA issuing directives that protect the integrity of the US livestock industry and the sovereignty of the United States border

We Oppose:

- Vertical integration by processors into production agriculture
- Any system of mandatory animal, or premise identification
- Privatization of pet breeder inspections
- *Ag Gag* laws that enable treatment detrimental to both farm animals and family farmers and thus threaten a wholesome and secure food supply

LOCAL CONTROL

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

We Support:

- County governments having the ability to maintain their democratic rights to enact health ordinances that protect the health of their citizens
- Legislation that enables local government (i.e. municipal, township, county) to enact ordinances, planning, and zoning that serve the best interests of the local community and that are democratically enacted
- Missourians having the *right to know* the extent of foreign interest in and/or ownership of Missouri farmland and their commercial privileges
- Restriction of foreign entities acquiring Missouri agricultural lands, holding federal grazing allotments or commercial privileges
- Prohibition of foreign ownership of Missouri agricultural land
- Federal government strengthening the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 by requiring mandatory reporting and penalties for failure to report.

We Oppose:

- Allocation of state tax incentives based solely on Agri-Ready compliance.
- State and federal government, or any international and/or quasi-governmental or private structure, from enacting laws, regulations or rules that give them the ability to put in place sanctions, or to otherwise impede or negate the right of local communities to enact labor, environmental, health, or safety laws, regulations, ordinances, planning, or zoning
- State and federal tax dollars going to foreign entities that operate agricultural businesses that compete with Missouri farmers

NEXT GENERATION FARMERS

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

We Support:

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

PATENTING**We support:**

- Promotion of research in and commercialization of high quality, conventionally bred, and non-genetically modified seed

We oppose:

- Allowing any person to sell, distribute, or use a non-germinating, genetically engineered seed rendered incapable of naturally producing second-generation seed (including terminator and/ or suicide seeds)
- Any new commercial patenting of life forms

PUBLIC PROGRAMS**Public Schools****We support:**

- Publicly funded, community-based schools with reasonable child-to-teacher ratios
- Adequate and equitable funding of rural schools
- Adequate and equitable funding of public pre-K-12 and higher education
- Free and affordable public education from pre-K through bachelor's or technical degree
- Local level decision making regarding consolidation of school districts
- Contract schools, and school voucher programs
- Farm-to-cafeteria and other local food programs
- Serving only wholesome, nutritious food in public schools and other institutions
- Legislation that funds and requires all Missouri public schools to provide free breakfast, lunch and after school meals to low-income children, with meals prepared solely from food produced in the United States.

We oppose:

- Unfunded federal mandates to state and local school authorities
- Forcing school district consolidation by the Missouri General Assembly
- Giving control of public schools to private enterprises such as charter

State Assisted

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

Social Security**We support:**

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

We oppose:

- A freeze on the Social Security cost-of-living allowance
- Any part of Social Security being invested in non-government-insured investments
- Proposals that would privatize the system

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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

We support:

- Increasing funding for research, education and development of unbiased information that under girds family farming, organic and sustainable agricultural methods
- Increasing research that protects a family farm/sustainable system of agriculture;
- Intellectual property rights, paid for by taxpayer monies, remaining in the public domain

- Increasing research that addresses health risks associated with exposure to pesticides, commercial fertilizer, animal manure and other agricultural environmental contaminants
- Strengthening consumer education regarding nutrition, food security, and issues impacting independent family farmers and ranchers and its relevance to consumer health and safety
- Public participation in the development of university research goals
- Development of agriculture curricula at all educational levels that build and support family farming and sustainable agriculture methods
- Nutrition education that focuses on sustainability and community development;
- Practices and policies that reduce and eliminate pesticides found on pollen used by honeybees
- Research into those issues challenging bee populations such as colony collapse syndrome
- Reformation of public education systems, including university extension, to serve the needs of local people and their communities
- The advancement of smart devices and AI specifically designed to assist and promote family and independent farm operations, and improve food safety and quality
- Modernizing checkoff programs to reflect the best interests of farmers
- .

We oppose:

- The use of checkoff dollars for anti-competitive and deceptive behavior by the checkoff boards

Dicamba

Organochloride benzoic acid derivative known as dicamba (3,6-dichloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid) is a broad-spectrum herbicide. The release of dicamba resistant genetically modified plants has resulted in an increase in the use of dicamba that has been associated with extensive non-target plant damage in Missouri despite its reformulation to ostensibly reduce volatility.

We support:

- Discontinuing further use of dicamba until non-target damage is avoidable

Industrial Hemp

Industrial Hemp is indigenous to Missouri with soil well suited to its production. There is a market for the fiber and other hemp product.

We support:

- The Mo. Dept. of Agriculture maximizing opportunities for hemp research and production
- The Mo. Dept. of Agriculture providing Hemp program integrity through leadership, policy, regulation and funding distribution in establishment and operation
- Provisions for product trials and variety selection in the 2018 Farm Bill

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

We support:

- A comprehensive rural development policy

- Removal of barriers to access land used for agriculture
- Educational institutions providing courses that promote entrepreneurship, rural communities and retention of young adults in rural areas
- Strong relationships between local producers and consumers
- State and local government enactment of bond financed agricultural loans for Young and Beginning Farmers as allowed under federal law
- A “Farm Link” program to join beginning farmers with established farmers
- Development of social and political infrastructures that will allow the targeting of agriculture policies, programs, and benefits necessary to encourage the entrance of young people into family farming
- Efforts to assist and encourage rural entrepreneurship by youth
- A state farm-to-cafeteria program that includes opportunity and funding for Missouri schools, hospitals, institutions and small businesses to purchase from community-based Missouri producers
- Law enforcement and prevention agencies in halting illegal drug production and trafficking in rural Missouri
- Continued monitoring and management of recreational and medical marijuana
- Providing state and federal assistance and resources to Missouri family farmers and rural communities to compensate for damages incurred by drug trafficking and/or the law enforcement activity designed to counter it, and to implement prevention, treatment, and educational programs
- Requiring legal search warrants and official law enforcement representation before any corporate investigation of farm fields and/or animal facilities
- Nonpartisan redistricting processes and the establishment of redistricting commissions by states
- Legislative districts based on standardized population and common geographic location
- Federal transportation policy that fosters a well-maintained competitive national transportation network comprised of an integrated system of railways, waterways, and roads, and that act to avoid transportation shortage for transporting grain, livestock and other perishable commodities

We oppose:

- Taking private property by eminent domain for, or by, private entities or private development
- Sitting legislators drawing district lines and gerrymandering of voting districts

VOTING PROTOCOL

Decisions made by delegates at national conventions are to represent the preferences of the membership in their respective states.

We support:

- A voting process that is executed in a manner which insures high levels of support and fairness by small-state as well as large-state membership
- Allow point of order challenges to decisions made at national conventions
- Reserving the use of a weighted vote for only the most important issues
- A weighted vote to require a minimum of support by 5 states before use

SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS**FAIRNESS FOR FARMERS**

Whereas Missouri ranks #2 in the nation for the number of family farms, and whereas family farmers and ranchers are the future of Missouri agriculture, and whereas only four multinational meatpackers control 54% of U.S. poultry process, 66% of U.S. pork process and 85% of beef packing, and whereas farmers must sell their corn and soybean crops to the same four companies that control 82 % of soybean crushing and 84% of wet corn milling in the U.S., and whereas just four firms account for approximately 84% of the global herbicide and pesticide markets, and whereas only four firms control 85% of corn seeds and 76% of soybean seeds, and whereas 95% of large farm tractors are made by just three companies and two companies manufacture nearly half of U.S. farm machinery, and whereas for one out of three common grocery items four corporations account for at least 75% of sales, therefore, be it resolved that the Missouri legislature and USDA should issue strong rules to enforce competition laws and to invest in a more resilient food supply chain that will benefit farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. Further, be it resolved that Missouri legislature and USDA support bills that would bring more price transparency, discovery, and reporting.

FAMILY FARMING AND THE PROSPECTIVE 2024 FARM BILL

Whereas the Farm Bill secures stability for farmers, ranchers, and producers, and whereas the agricultural landscape has changed considerably from the implementation of the 2018 Farm bill, therefore be it resolved that the prospective 2024 Farm Bill reflects increased crop insurance with greater geographic diversity and with income and subsidy limits, improved affordability of higher levels of crop insurance coverage and supplemental coverage options, updated PLC reference prices to represent current production costs, a dual enrollment option for ARC and PLC payment, closure of farm program eligibility loopholes to ensure support is directed to family farmers and ranchers, strengthening of the Livestock Forage Program and Livestock Indemnity Program to ensure payments accurately represent losses, preserving funding for climate-smart agriculture and keeping it in climate-smart conservation, voluntary options that support farmers and ranchers who adopt conservation practices, increased flexibility for existing conservation programs and provide sufficient funding to meet demand, increased payments for conservation practices that deliver the greatest environmental benefits, and increased funding for research on the costs and benefits of climate-smart agricultural practices.

APPLICATION OF BIOWASTE ON AGRICULTURAL LAND

Whereas regulated bio-solids and recycling water from residential waste treatment plants have shown beneficial effects on crop yields and, whereas the application of un-regulated sludge poses serious contamination risks, therefore, be it resolved that strict regulations be placed on the use of un-regulated sludge and/or the blended un-regulated waste streams from residential and commercial entities on agricultural land, with zero tolerance

868 levels placed on harmful compounds, such as PFAS, and medicinal and pharmaceutical
869 products.

870

871 **LEGISLATION THAT PROTECTS MANUFACTURERS FROM LAWSUITS**

872 Whereas it is the responsibility of manufacturers to thoroughly test the safety of their
873 products, and whereas it is not the duty of distributors, applicators, or farmers to test the
874 safety of products produced and sold by manufacturers, and whereas hazards of long-
875 term use products may manifest over extended time periods, therefore, be it resolved that
876 for in the best interest of consumers, manufacturers should remain liable for the safety of
877 their products throughout the production, distribution, sale, and use of their products.

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – problem-solving and decision-making capabilities of the human mind that are mimicked by machines or software.

BFP - basic formula for pricing; the concept applied to pricing of milk. BFP has been utilized to set the price of milk used for manufacturing and as a mover of the higher-Class prices. As such, it is a key determinant of changes in producer prices.

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

Bylaws Document - The document containing the regulations designed to organize the internal and daily operating procedures, and the activities associated with the business of, an organization or corporation.

Code of Conduct – a set of instructions outlining the norms, rules, and responsibilities or proper practices of each individual or group of individuals associated with an organization or corporation.

Conflict of interest - a conflict of interest occurs when an individual’s personal interests – family, friendships, financial, business, or social factors – could compromise his or her judgment, decisions, or actions when serving Farmers Union.

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

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

- 924 **E85** – gasoline blend consisting of 85 percent ethanol, approved for use in newer
925 vehicles.
926
- 927 **U S Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** – a federal agency of the United States
928 Department of Health and Human Services
- 929 **Genetically engineered organism (GEO)** - See genetically modified organism (GMO).
- 930 **Genetic modification (GM)** - The technique (or process) of removing, modifying or
931 adding genes to a living organism via genetic engineering or other more traditional
932 methods. Also referred to as gene splicing, recombinant DNA (rDNA) technology or
933 genetic engineering.
- 934 **Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)** – A genetically modified organism (GMO) is
935 any organism the genetics of which have been altered through the use of modern
936 biotechnology to create a novel combination of genetic material. GMOs may be the
937 source of genetically modified food ingredients and are also widely used in scientific
938 research and to produce goods other than food.
- 939 **NRCS** – Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture;
940 provides America’s farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance to
941 voluntarily make conservation improvements.
942
- 943 **Policy Document** - A formal document for which the purpose, definitions, positions,
944 statements, and responsibilities outlined within its content provide a guide to be followed
945 by the leaders and members of the organization or corporation in order to achieve the
946 specific goals of the organization or corporation.
947
- 948 **Resolution** - a document recording the decision(s) made by the board members of an organization or
949 corporation.
950
- 951 **Smart Device** – an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks
952 via different wireless protocols that can operate to some extent interactively and
953 autonomously.
954
- 955 **Waters of the United States (WOTUS)** - rule is largely a technical document, defining
956 which rivers, streams, lakes and marshes fall under the jurisdiction of the Environmental
957 Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers.