

Speech

The following speech outline for the “Strengthening Communities” campaign works nicely with the materials we have available for display and handouts. We encourage you to add your county-specific facts and figures to this stock speech, or create your own version for your county Farm Bureau.

1. **Welcome and thank** organization for the opportunity to speak.
2. **Introduction**

Farming and ranching has long been recognized as a tough profession, but it wasn't until the financial downturn of the other two economic forces in our state's economy – tourism and construction – that state leaders realized the gem they have in a heavy agricultural producing state. While other industries were decimated by the recent recession, agriculture, for the most part, held steady.
3. **Florida Farm Bureau – our members strengthen communities**

Whether actively farming, engaged in the interests of farmers and ranchers, or working off the farm, Florida Farm Bureau members help strengthen small towns and urban areas. Our families participate in community events, support youth activities and represent agriculture - a foundation of the state's economy. As part of our organization's mission, we specifically work to improve the quality of rural life. Members actively seek solutions to economic, educational, legislative and social issues affecting business, particularly those which could negatively impact the agricultural community.

As diverse as our membership base may be, our cause is united – to make our communities the best they can be. Our members live, work and contribute to their communities and play a vital role in future economic success.
4. **Farm Bureau supports family farms**

The Florida Farm Bureau's mission is to increase the net income of farmers and ranchers, and to improve the quality of rural life. We are the Voice of Florida Agriculture, and work year-round to help our members be the best food and fiber producers in the nation.

Most farm operations are family enterprises. At Farm Bureau we support agricultural production of every size and commodity, and in return, we realize our members strengthen the communities where they live and work.

Farm Bureau hosts a variety of programs, like Young Farmers & Ranchers, Women's Leadership, policy development and legislative activities, all of which provide our members with boundless opportunities for professional and personal growth.
5. **Farm Bureau members help grow the economy**

As the second-largest factor driving Florida's economy, agriculture and related industries generate over \$133 billion in sales revenue, \$76.5 billion value-added impacts, 1.6 million jobs, and \$9.28 billion in business taxes for local, state and

federal governments. Simply stated, this industry is the backbone of our state's economy, even during difficult economic times.

Florida Farm Bureau, with 143,000 members-strong, works hard to support our farmers and ranchers, and we know our members are a vital part of this economy. Members advocate for policies, programs and general business practices that make their communities financially successful.

6. **Help us celebrate the value of agriculture**

Here in the Sunshine State we're proud to lead the nation in citrus production, and we are a top producer of many fruits and vegetables. As the largest general agricultural organization, Florida Farm Bureau salutes the more than 47,000 farms across the state contributing in a positive way to our state's economy. While providing a safe, affordable and abundant food supply, Florida farmers also invest in the communities where they live and work. Our members produce 280 different grown commodities, yielding an amazing range of food, fiber and renewable fuels.

7. **In closing...**

Farm Bureau programs are geared to encourage hard-working farming families to keep up the good work. So thank a farmer the next time you get the chance – or better yet, become a Farm Bureau member today!