



Florida Farm Bureau Federation

2017

POLICIES

*FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
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Farm Bureau Philosophy

We believe in the founding principles of this nation. The strength of our nation lies not in government but in its citizens. Government is the servant of its citizens, not their master. We recognize that to keep our nation strong, citizens must be involved in the political process: demonstrating and demanding high moral standards and values from public officials and private citizens. We oppose the public glorification of sex and violence in all forms.

We believe in the dignity of the individual. This God given quality is basic to our way of life. Dignity is achieved through safeguarding opportunity for individual initiative, not by illusions of security by government programs. There is dignity in work, and persons should be rewarded for their productive contributions to society.

We believe in the American economic system based on the right to make a profit. The right to own, control and use private property is the very heart of our competitive economic system. While this right does not permit use of property in a harmful, illegal, or immoral way, we are alarmed by recent trends to infringe on legal use of private property. We believe that property owners should be compensated from public funds for curtailment of the use of property deemed "in the public interest."

We believe that education is necessary for a well-informed public and favor permitting the use of organized prayer in public schools. We continue to support positive, creative youth programs such as 4-H and FFA which provide educational opportunities, leadership training and experience in the free enterprise system. We encourage activities, which would increase public awareness of the industry and contributions made by agriculture to the people of the State. We believe that discipline is necessary within that society. Both self-discipline and proper group behavior begin within the family. We do not condone abuse in any form, under the guise of discipline, whether it be a child, spouse or parent who is the target of said abuse.

We believe that all persons have the ability and responsibility to improve the society in which they live. Sharing one's talents through voluntary efforts has been keystone to America. We are proud that the members of our Farm Bureau have accomplished much to improve our industry, communities and nation. We invite others to join in our service to agriculture and mankind.

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Agriculture Chemicals

1. Chemical Testing

We urge chemical companies to prominently label chemicals for their effects on all life stages of pollinators and then label the chemicals appropriately. (APICULTURE)

2. Fertilizer Ordinances

We urge local governments to adopt the State of Florida's Model Ordinance for Florida-Friendly Fertilizer use on Urban Landscapes (§403.9337, Florida Statutes). Based on an overwhelming body of peer-reviewed, sound scientific evidence and research, this Model Ordinance allows for healthy turf and proper use of fertilizer to strengthen plant life and maximize filtration capacity. The Model Ordinance properly requires individuals who oversee or apply fertilizer for commercial purposes to be Best Management Practices (BMPs) trained, certified and licensed.

We oppose fertilizer black-out periods and point-of-purchase bans, as such are counter-productive, ignore sound science, do not change human behavior and transfer the burden and responsibility of local governments onto the backs of local businesses. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

3. Fertilizer Regulation

We support efforts to ensure delivery of bulk fertilizer loads, with a financial penalty for deficient fertilizer. We continue to support unrestricted field sampling of fertilizer at no increased cost to the farmer. We oppose any efforts to allow the sale of unregulated fertilizer. We oppose additional taxes being placed on fertilizer unless the state assumes the responsibility for mitigation.

We support maintaining the Agriculture Feed, Seed, and Fertilizer Advisory Council's current structure.

We should work with other agricultural organizations to resolve agricultural problems with liabilities related to soil and water contamination resulting from the use of chemicals and fertilizers. (PEANUT/COTTON)

4. Food Quality Protection Act

We believe in a pesticide regulatory standard that is protective of human health and the environment. Responsible pest management, which includes the judicious use of pest control materials, provides significant societal health benefits. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should implement the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) openly and scientifically using reliable information. EPA has the obligation to acknowledge that pesticides registered under FQPA are recognized as safe.

The Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) should use every means possible to force modification or improvement of the FQPA requiring the use of sound science and economically viable methods of enforcement and implementation that will not create undue hardship on Florida growers.

We should actively seek the reinstatement of crop protection products that have had uses taken off the label. (OVERSIGHT)

5. New Crop Protection Products

We support actions which ensure continued research and development of new crop protection products. We urge that the banning or limiting of already approved crop protection products be based only on scientific research data.

We urge the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to quickly register crop protection products that would benefit Florida growers. (PEANUT/COTTON)

6. Pesticide Management

We support mandatory record keeping of all pesticides used in Florida provided that individual producer's records are treated as confidential business records.

All other state agencies must have sufficient cause to require the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to show producer records. Producers shall be notified by the FDACS when other agencies request such records.

We encourage pesticide users to voluntarily implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. (OVERSIGHT)

7. Registration for Minor Crops

We urge the appropriate state and federal agencies to address the cost of label registration for chemicals to be used on minor crops. We also request economical methods of label clearance for minor crop chemicals that include procedures to speed clearance of chemicals (i.e., pest control/abscission growth hormones on minor use crops that are already cleared for other crops). (CITRUS) (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

8. Right of Producers to Use Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

We support the right of individual producers to use chemicals and pharmaceuticals in accordance with label restrictions. If the user has followed label directions, he or she shall not be held liable for damages.

We oppose exclusive use of web-based pesticide labeling. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

9. Soil Fumigants

We support the continued use of agricultural chemicals that currently have no viable alternatives. We further encourage research funded through state and federal agencies, as well as private associations, to develop economically viable soil fumigation options for agricultural producers.

U.S. farmers must not be constrained by regulations that result in a competitive disadvantage.
(FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

Best Management Practices

10. Agricultural Best Management Practices/Local Governments

We urge local governments to participate with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) in the development, implementation and adoption by rule of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address agricultural non-point source discharges by region, watershed or on a statewide basis. We oppose the development of ordinances by local governments to address agricultural non-point source discharges.
(WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

11. Animal Husbandry Best Management Practices

We urge the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to be the lead agency certifying that livestock producers are using animal husbandry Best Management Practices (BMPs) based on United States industry standards. (DAIRY)

12. Best Management Practices

We support scientific, economically feasible and technology-based voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all commodities as adopted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) with industry input as solutions to potential ground water and surface water quality and quantity issues while maintaining or even enhancing agricultural production.

We support scientific, economically feasible and technology-based voluntary BMPs for all commodities as developed by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS) as a part of Federal cost-share programs.

We support Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Resource Conservation & Development Councils in their efforts to work with agricultural landowners in implementing BMPs.

As BMPs are established, FDACS and the USDA/NRCS should continue as the lead agencies in the development and implementation of BMPs.

We support continued research for BMPs and educational programs for the public that identify improved management practices as they relate to the environment. We encourage incentive program funding by the state and federal governments. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

13. Nursery and Landscape Best Management Practices

All landscape BMPs should fall under the authority of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) rather than the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Local landscape ordinances, and their enforcement, shall comply with and not exceed the Green Industry BMPs and the State of Florida's Model Ordinance for Florida-Friendly Fertilizer use on Urban Landscapes (§403.9337, Florida Statutes). (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

Commodities

APICULTURE

14. Apiary Identification

We recommend that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/Division of Plant Industry explore the related issues of proper apiary identification, registering apiary sites, and illegal placement of apiaries. (APICULTURE)

15. Apiary Quality Assurance

We strongly recommend that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other appropriate agencies take immediate action to identify and eliminate problems with adulterated and/or mislabeled honey and honey products, foreign and domestic, by enforcing existing laws. (APICULTURE)

16. Beekeeping Greenbelt Assessment

We recommend that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry (FDACS/DPI), the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and the Florida State Beekeepers Association (FSBA) work to educate county property appraisers in an effort to standardize rules that harmonize beekeeping agricultural assessment classification for greenbelt tax assessment purpose. (APICULTURE)

17. Bees on Public Lands

We recommend that beekeepers be permitted to keep bees on appropriate publicly owned land. (APICULTURE)

18. Definition of Honey

We recommend that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) adopt the 1987/2001 Revised Codex Standards of Identity for honey (with certain deviations) as the national standard for honey. (APICULTURE)

19. Honey Loan Program

We support continuation of a Honey Loan Program and/or a subsidy payment in an effort to assist Florida beekeepers. (APICULTURE)

20. Integrated Pest Management Promotion

We urge farmers and other pesticide applicators to utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs that are effective in controlling insect pests while minimizing any detrimental effects to honey bees. Such programs would resolve the viability of all pollinators and especially honey bees and the viability of our fruit and vegetable industry.

We urge that the general public be educated on the usefulness of and threats to honey bees. (APICULTURE)

21. Native Pollinators

We support rebuilding viable and vibrant pollinator communities through continued research across all lands in pollinator populations and to improve long-term profitability of agriculture. (APICULTURE)

AQUACULTURE

22. ALLIGATOR FARMING

We support the development of alligator farming through continued research on captive propagation, ranching, husbandry practices and the Florida Alligator Marketing and Education (FAME) program. We also support a cooperative effort between alligator farms, state and federal agencies to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) and other standards for farm operations and products. (AQUACULTURE)

23. Aquaculture as Agriculture

We support Federal legislation recognizing aquaculture, including ornamental aquaculture, as an agricultural industry with full benefits of traditional agriculture and adopt a definition of aquaculture that is consistent with existing American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) policy. (AQUACULTURE)

24. Aquaculture Drug Labeling

We continue to support the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) implementation of the Minor Use Minor Species (MUMS) law. We oppose species-by-species labeling of drugs. (AQUACULTURE)

25. Black Bass (Genus Micropterus) Farming

We support state legislation that would allow black bass (Genus Micropterus) to be raised and sold commercially for human consumption. (AQUACULTURE)

26. Broodstock and Farm Cultured Products

Aquaculture products as agricultural products are exempted from regulations dealing with the protection of feral stocks.

We recommend amending the Lacey Act, Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to allow free interstate commerce of legitimately grown or harvested aquaculture products.

We encourage the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service to allow

aquaculturists to obtain plant materials, invertebrates, vertebrates, broodstock, eggs or juveniles from the wild as required for aquaculture purposes and such materials become property of the aquaculturist upon arrival at his farm and be considered agricultural products. (AQUACULTURE)

27. Marine Aquaculture in Federal Waters

In the intent to expand marine aquaculture in federally regulated waters, we support funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to be the lead agency in facilitating the discussion with industry and local, state and federal agencies.

We urge NOAA to have a cohesive plan to:

- Identify marine aquaculture sites in federal waters,
- Assist industry in the placement of marine aquaculture in federal waters,
- Reduce conflicts among competing uses,
- Minimize adverse impacts on the environment and
- Identify activities for potential co-location with aquaculture operations. (AQUACULTURE)

28. Shrimp Farming Research

We support research and development for Florida's shrimp farming industry. (AQUACULTURE)

29. Sturgeon Farming

We support the development of paddlefish and sturgeon farming through continued research on captive propagation and husbandry practices. We also support a cooperative effort between paddlefish and sturgeon farms and state and federal agencies. We recommend amending the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to provide a captive-bred exemption. (AQUACULTURE)

30. Working Waterfronts

We encourage the Florida Legislature to fully implement the Working Waterfront's constitutional amendment to ensure the aquaculture industry's long term viability. (AQUACULTURE)

31. United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services

We urge increased and continued funding for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services to enable them to cooperate with the aquaculture industry, state and federal agencies. (AQUACULTURE)

BEEF

32. Animal Health Products

We support the continued sale of over-the-counter animal health products and oppose further restrictions on their use. (BEEF)

33. Animal Identification

We support an animal identification system that:

- guarantees it will maintain confidentiality of producers, premises and animal information;
- functions at the industry's speed of commerce without substantial financial burden; and
- utilizes a privately held database of information available only to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and/or the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Division of Animal Industry.

In the event of mandatory animal ID, we support increased federal funding for phased implementation. (BEEF) (DAIRY)

34. Beef Check-Off

We support the current National Beef Check-Off program administered under the 1985 Beef Promotions and Research Act and Order. To continue beef education, research and promotion, we support future increases to the National program, as well as an automatic State Check- Off with a refund option. (BEEF)

35. Beef Research and Promotion

We support the continued appropriation of state funds for beef research and promotion. (BEEF)

36. Florida Cattlemen's Association's Voluntary Assessment

We support the Florida Cattlemen's Association's (FCA) program for funding environmental research, education, and legal defense on a voluntary basis. (BEEF)

37. Livestock Animal Practices Training

We support training, education and certification of animal control personnel and local level law enforcement personnel in industry-approved livestock animal practices in Florida. (BEEF)

CITRUS

38. Abandoned Fields and Groves

Slowing the spread of disease and pests due to abandoned or unmanaged land that has been in agricultural production is an important issue to the agriculture industry. The Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) should work with the appropriate county and state agencies to find ways to address this issue without unduly infringing on private property rights. FFBF supports the development of incentive programs for the removal of abandoned or neglected agricultural properties.

FFBF encourages public entities working towards mitigation of abandoned fields and/or groves not increase disease or pest populations in adjoining agricultural properties. (CITRUS)

39. Adulteration of Juice

We support the timely enforcement of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations concerning the adulteration of citrus juice. (CITRUS)

40. Citrus Good Agricultural Practices

We support the development of area or crop specific Citrus Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) based on conclusive science. (CITRUS)

41. Citrus Harvesting

We support legitimate research proposals aimed at reducing citrus harvesting costs either through increased productivity on the part of labor, mechanization or through abscission technology. (CITRUS)

42. Citrus Products in Public Schools

Because of the exceptional nutritional value that Florida's citrus products provide, we urge the use of Florida orange and grapefruit juice in user-friendly, single-serve containers in the public school system. (CITRUS)

43. Citrus Trust Funds

We strongly urge the State of Florida to keep the faith with the Florida grower and not take funds or accrued interest from the Citrus Advertising Trust Fund, Florida Citrus Inspection Trust Fund or any other trust fund that is solely funded by growers or the citrus industry. (CITRUS)

44. Department of Citrus

The Department of Citrus (DOC), financed by grower taxes and federal programs for exports, should have as its primary function the enhancement of the profitability of Florida citrus growers.

The DOC's program for increasing profitability should include the establishment and perfection of a system to sell Florida-identified quality through the use of marketing and public relations.

We urge the DOC to encourage high quality standards for Florida orange juice.

Promotional activities sponsored by the DOC should be structured so that they may be used not only to increase participation in the identification program, but also to expand the total marketing and public relations effort on orange and grapefruit products and on fresh fruit.

The Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) should give consideration to the use of only one symbol, which can be advertised and used on fresh fruit, grapefruit products and orange juice products.

Secondary focus of the DOC should be to financially support research for the management and control of pests and diseases. (CITRUS)

45. Risk Management Citrus Fruit Policy

We support clarifying the difference between processed and fresh fruit policy for claims. A grower should be compensated based on the policy that is purchased without penalty.

We support that there is no difference between the declaration day of the policy and the coverage start date. (CITRUS)

DAIRY

46. Animal Husbandry Regulations and Education

We advocate for the welfare of our animals through scientifically sound, economically feasible practices. We should develop educational and communication programs at the state and federal level about these practices.

We strongly encourage the use of educational materials in our public schools that encourage the humane, scientifically based treatment of animals. We support statewide curriculum that mandates animal care education. (DAIRY)

47. Animal Products in Public Schools

Because of the exceptional nutritional value that milk and dairy products provide, we urge the use of whole milk and milk products in single-serve containers in the public school system. In addition, we urge the proper handling of dairy and meat products used in the public school system and other government entities. (BEEF) (DAIRY)

48. Dairy Economic Incentives

We support efforts by the state and federal governments to ensure viable dairy production and processing in Florida through economic and other incentives. (DAIRY)

49. Florida Dairy Regulations

All regulation of Florida producers, processors and manufacturers of dairy products that will be sold for consumption by humans or animals should be done by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Bureau of Dairy Industry. (DAIRY)

50. Imported Milk Standards

We support strict enforcement of milk quality standards on raw milk imported into the State of Florida. This enforcement should be done by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Bureau of Dairy Industry. (DAIRY)

51. Locally Produced Dairy Products

We support any advertising and/or promotion programs that would encourage the consumption of Florida produced milk and other dairy products. (DAIRY)

52. National Dairy Policy

Future changes to national dairy policy should recognize that local fluid milk demand is best served by local milk production whenever available. This ensures consumers have ample supplies of fresh, high quality fluid milk products at the best value possible.

National legislative/administrative plans or programs that manage milk supply must take into consideration regional differences in fluid milk demand and supply. Any plan/program must provide the proper economic signal to dairy farmers to meet the demand needs of the local fluid milk market.

Changes in Federal Milk Marketing Orders should take place solely through the administrative hearing process in the respective marketing areas and should not be subject to changes legislatively. Any major proposed revisions to the number of milk classes or Federal Milk Marketing Orders should have an economic impact analysis performed before the changes are implemented. This analysis should include economic impacts to both the dairy industry and individual dairy farmer income.

We request that Congress fully fund the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) and not have a sequester deduction. Congress should increase funding for the Federal Livestock Gross Margin Dairy (LGM-Dairy) risk management program because the current level of funding is inadequate resulting in farmers seeking participation in the program being denied access. We request that dairy producers have the option to switch between the LGM and MPP Programs. (DAIRY)

53. Synthetic Milk

We oppose any plant based or synthetic beverage being labeled as milk. (DAIRY)

ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

54. Environmental Benefits of Plants

We support research and promotion of plants and turfgrass as a means of improving air and water quality, heat reduction, soil and energy conservation, as well as the other environmental benefits they provide to improve the quality of life.

We strongly support full funding of the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

We support continual educational efforts such as the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

55. Foliage Shipments to California

We strongly encourage the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry (FDACS/DPI), the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the California County Commissioners and

other state agencies to resolve, with industry input, issues affecting the shipment and inspections of Florida plant material to California. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

EQUINE

56. Equine as Livestock

We support clarification of livestock in section §588.13, Florida Statutes, to include the breeding, pasturing, boarding and training of livestock. We support the continued inclusion of equine in the definition of livestock. (EQUINE)

57. Equine Disposition

We support legislation and rulings that allow for the sale, possession and transport of horses intended for processing or rendering, and encourage an education campaign targeted toward legislators and the media as to the consequences of eliminating equine harvest, resulting in unintended animal abuse and neglect and the negative impact on the equine industry.

We also support domestic ownership, control and location of equine processing facilities, and the reopening and development of new equine harvesting facilities. (EQUINE)

58. Equine Industry Economic Impact

We support the development of an equine inventory and economic impact study for the industry in Florida. (EQUINE)

59. Florida Horse Council

We support the establishment of the Florida Horse Council. (EQUINE)

60. Florida Horse Park

We support continued efforts to develop and fund the Florida Agriculture Center and Horse Park. The proposed facility will become a beneficial economic enhancement to the state as well as a positive public relations vehicle for all of Florida's equine industry. (EQUINE)

61. Horse Identification

We support the use of International Organization for Standardization (IOS) compliant microchip implanting for identification of horses for intra/interstate and international movement. (EQUINE)

62. Legislation for Horse Racing

We support legislation that will provide a beneficial environment for Florida's horse race industry to expand and allow state horse racing purses and breeders awards to be competitive with other states.

Any product affiliated with racing facilities, lottery legislation, or gambling must allow for an expansion of racing opportunities, purses and breeding incentives for Florida race horses and provide tracks with the same regulatory privileges afforded to other gaming venues.

We support the establishment of a racing commission for the purpose of regulating sanctioned pari-mutuel racing in Florida. (EQUINE)

63. Pari-mutuel Decoupling

We support legislation and regulation that requires a substantial number of live racing opportunities at all pari-mutuel venues under contractual agreement requirements with their respective and lawful horsemen's groups. We do not support decoupling at any pari-mutuel venues. (EQUINE)

FORESTRY

64. Florida Forest Service

The Florida Forest Service (FFS) should continue its assistance efforts for private timberland owners. The FFS should continue landowner and neighborhood incentive programs to promote and conduct fuel load reduction. Sufficient resources should be allocated to enhance personal compensation package and equipment replacement as well as update the annual forest inventory. The FFS should also utilize the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Marketing Division to increase public education, create awareness and acceptance of the need for statewide prescribed burning to include public safety, wildlife, ecological, agricultural, and commercial benefits. (FORESTRY)

65. Non-Market Values of Working Forests

We support the recognition of the many environmental benefits that forestry provides to society. We encourage the inclusion of current and future management practices that sequester carbon.

We support the establishment of forestry baselines that recognize the environmental benefits of forest management practices and provide full credit for existing forest stands. (FORESTRY)

66. Prescribed Burning

We support efforts to promote more prescribed burning in Florida. We also support increasing opportunities and flexibility for Certified Prescribed Burn Managers (CPBM) and certified pile burners to burn more. (FORESTRY)

67. Public Land/Multiple-Use Management

We support active multiple-use management of all public land including federal forest timber production, using the Florida Forest Service (FFS) as the lead agency for all state forested lands. (FORESTRY)

68. Reforestation and Forest Management

We support the reforestation and management assistance of private timberlands through cost-effective incentive programs. These incentives should allow for more production-based forestry practices such as higher planting densities and species selection. (FORESTRY)

69. State Tree Nursery

We support the Florida Forest Service (FFS) Tree Improvement Program for all commercial species and the State Nursery Program to provide high quality seed and seedlings to landowners. (FORESTRY)

70. Wildfire Suppression

We support increased funding for the Florida Forest Service (FFS) wildfire equipment replacement needs, firefighting personnel training and salaries. This is critical to the protection of Florida's natural resources and safety of its citizens. (FORESTRY)

FRUIT/VEGETABLE

71. Antitrust Laws

We support the rigorous enforcement of antitrust laws by the United States Department of Justice for agricultural commodities. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

72. License and Bond

We support a system of licensing and bonding of agricultural dealers in Florida to better protect the growers. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE) (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

73. Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act

We support retention of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide growers with more effective provisions for enforcing prompt payment and aid them in situations in which the buyer has not paid the seller. We support program and reporting requirements that reflect modern business practices. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

PEANUT/COTTON

74. Cotton Board Uniform Assessment

We fully support the Cotton Board Uniform Assessment and should continue in its role as a certified producer organization. (PEANUT/COTTON)

75. Cottonseed as Oilseed

We support cottonseed as a covered commodity with allowance of updated yields with an adjusted price support level. (PEANUT/COTTON)

76. Documentary Stamp Exemption

All commodities placed in a Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan should be exempt from Documentary Stamps or other state loan fees. (PEANUT/COTTON)

77. Florida Cotton Marketing Order

We support the effort to implement a mandatory Florida cotton marketing order for the purpose of research, promotion, education, and other cotton related activities. (PEANUT/COTTON)

78. Loose Shelled Kernels

All loose shelled kernels should be crushed and should not be allowed to enter the edible trade. We support no reduction in price for loose shelled kernels. (PEANUT/COTTON)

79. Peanut Board Uniform Assessment

We encourage greater emphasis on production research through the Peanut Board Uniform Assessment. No less than legislated available funds should be used for production research. The Peanut Board should have authority to increase the proportion of research funds as it sees fit. (PEANUT/COTTON)

80. Seg 2 and Seg 3 Peanuts

Seg 2 and Seg 3 peanuts should be supported at no less than 85% of loan rate. We support maintaining the grower option to regrade Seg 2 and Seg 3 peanuts.

Farmer's stock should fall under the same tolerance level for Seg 2 and Seg 3 as outgoing stock. (PEANUT/COTTON)

SOD/TURFGRASS

81. Environmental Benefits of Turfgrass

We support legislation that requires scientific evaluation and utilization of the environmental benefits of turfgrass.

Environmental benefits include, but are not limited to, carbon sequestration, filtering pollutants from water, preventing erosion, generating oxygen and its ability to provide a cooling effect to the atmosphere. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

82. Regulation of Turfgrass

We support legislation that requires governmental agencies to utilize sound economic and scientific research and environmental benefits of turfgrass prior to developing new programs, rules, ordinances and state regulations relating to the production and utilization of turfgrass products. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

83. Turfgrass and Water Conservation

We oppose any legislation, ordinances or rules developed without the use of peer-reviewed, sound science and industry input that would limit turfgrass as criteria for water conservation. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

84. Turfgrass Education

We continue to support educational programs based on sound scientific research that are directed at regulators, policy makers and the public. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

SUGAR

85. Domestic Sugar Program Management

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) must provide program support through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) in order to maintain a sustainable sugar industry. The CCC program management must include non-recourse loans. Loan rates should be balanced to reflect increased production costs and inflation. In addition, we strongly support the Farm Facility Storage Loan Program at no net cost to the U.S. Treasury. (SUGAR)

86. Federal Sugar Policy

America's sugar policy should continue to be managed to operate at no net cost to the U.S. Treasury.

We support Federal policy that insures a strong, economically viable domestic sugar industry. We strongly support the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) management and operation of the sugar program in a manner that ensures fair returns to the grower.

We encourage the USDA to publish monthly USDA validated reports on Mexico sugar consumption, production, processing, exports, imports, and non-food use, similar to reports available in the U.S. (SUGAR)

Education

87. 4-H and FFA Youth Programs

We support 4-H Extension and The National FFA Organization (FFA) youth programs. These programs should encourage an agricultural-based education system that utilizes traditional agricultural experiences. (OVERSIGHT)

88. Agricultural Education

We support agricultural education and The National FFA Organization (FFA) programs in Florida's schools. State funds generated by Full Time Equivalent (FTE) from career programs must be utilized by these programs. Each local agriculture education program shall have a functioning advisory committee.

We urge the Florida Legislature and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) to keep weighted FTE funding for agriculture education programs.

We urge the FDOE to provide for agriculture education at the middle school level.

We recommend that more emphasis by the FDOE be given to hiring certified, professional teachers for all secondary school agriculture education teacher positions.

We urge the FDOE's continued support of FFA activities and agricultural education competitive events.

We support certification programs in agriculture, such as those facilitated by Agriculture Education Services and Technology, Inc. (OVERSIGHT)

89. Agricultural Fairs and Expositions

We strongly support agricultural fairs and expositions and the public exhibition of livestock. These programs encourage and support 4-H and The National FFA Organization (FFA) youth programs and agricultural education. We urge municipalities and governmental entities to actively support fairs and expositions to help them grow and flourish. (OVERSIGHT)

90. Agriculture in the Classroom

We strongly support the Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program, and encourage our members to purchase the agricultural specialty license plate (Ag Tag). (OVERSIGHT)

91. Aquaculture Education

We encourage funding and participation in aquacultural education programs at all levels for the youth of the State of Florida through programs such as Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC), The National FFA Organization (FFA) and 4-H. (AQUACULTURE)

92. Educational Materials that Discourage Use of Animal Products

We strongly oppose the use of educational materials in our public schools that discourage the use of animal products.

We strongly urge the use of accurate and up-to-date information on the value of animal products in a healthy diet as part of the nutrition curriculum for our public schools. (BEEF) (DAIRY)

93. Food Animal Practitioners

We support efforts by the Legislature, the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) College of Veterinary Medicine and industry to address the shortage of food animal practitioners in Florida. We recommend the development of scholarships for students who will commit to practice food animal medicine for a specified number of years in Florida. (BEEF) (DAIRY)

94. Precision Agriculture Definition

With every major University in the country having courses labeled as precision ag, we in the production community would like to see a uniform definition of what precision agriculture is and would like to ensure that standards are science-based, with quantifiable reductions in the production inputs and environmental impact, uniform for all producers of an eligible product, subject to the oversight of producers, and eligible for private-public partnerships. (OVERSIGHT)

95. The University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Agriculture provides positive impact on the economy and environment of Florida to the benefit of all citizens. We support representation of the agricultural industry on the Board of Trustees. We urge the Board of Trustees and the Florida Legislature to give high priority to agricultural education, research and transfer of technology needed to keep agriculture viable in this state.

We strongly support the continuation of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) as an integrated research, teaching and extension program and a separate budgetary unit for conducting the food and agricultural programs at the University of Florida.

We encourage the UF/IFAS and agricultural leadership to continue to strengthen joint planning of the research and education programs for the State of Florida.

We urge the Legislature to recognize that the UF/IFAS budget is a unique budget item of the state that provides for economic development and consumer benefits. As government is restructured, this budget area should be strengthened in relation to other university budget areas.

We urge the Florida Legislature and Congress to provide funding to the UF/IFAS to primarily meet the challenges of commercial agriculture in this state.

We support the School of Natural Resources and the Environment using cross-disciplinary resources administered by the Office of the Vice President of the UF/IFAS.

We encourage the UF/IFAS to continue research on new and emerging crops (e.g. perennial peanut, alternative energy crops) and disseminate additional information to producers.

We support the appropriate interstate regionalization of agricultural research, extension and education at our land grant institutions.

We support the development of a curriculum at land grant universities to address public perceptions and the benefits of agriculture technology. Once developed, the curriculum should be aggressively marketed to the general public and agricultural producers through the extension program.

We recommend and urge the placement of Extension Directors with specific knowledge and appreciation of Florida agriculture who understand and will support, encourage and foster extension programs such as 4-H and traditional agriculture.

We encourage the UF/IFAS to include industry representatives in the selection and review of potential Extension Director candidates.

We support the repeal of any indirect costs.

The appropriation of any indirect cost fees collected from agricultural research shall only be used for infrastructure enhancement, hiring of appropriate staff and efforts to increase the profitability of Florida agricultural producers. (OVERSIGHT)

96. Two-Year Agricultural Degree Programs

We favor the development of more two-year agricultural degree programs in cooperation with our current state college system utilizing the professional expertise of the state's land grant institutions. (OVERSIGHT)

Energy

97. Biomass

We support the continued inclusion of timber and other renewable resources when defining biomass. (FORESTRY)

98. Energy

We support the development of all sources of energy (i.e., biofuels, biomass-based energy, wind, solar, etc.).

To the extent that waste material or underutilized land can be used to produce energy, we support research and cost assistance to producers by the appropriate local, state and federal agencies to foster alternative energy production or conservation.

We support legislation to encourage agricultural based energy production. We support tax incentives, grants, grid access and a price for the renewable electricity produced based on the cost of production and a reasonable return on investment.

However, because of the upward pressure ethanol incentives have on corn prices and thus increasing feed costs for those in animal production agriculture, we believe these incentives should be available only to non-corn ethanol methods of production and processing.

We support the suspension of the mandatory use of corn-based ethanol in fuel. (OVERSIGHT)

99. Oil and Natural Gas Exploration

We support continued and increased domestic exploration and drilling for oil and natural gas. (OVERSIGHT)

100. Refineries

We support the necessary construction or renovation of facilities required for refining any future or present sources of energy whether fossil or biofuel. (OVERSIGHT)

101. Regulation of Greenhouse Gases

We oppose the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions through a mandatory cap and trade system or regulatory enforcement. Emission offsets that sequester carbon through soil, forestry and other agricultural offsets are just as effective in reducing atmospheric carbon as are emission reductions and should be fully recognized in any cap and trade system. (OVERSIGHT)

Farm Policy/Farm Programs

102. Farm Income

Future farm policy should be based on or take into consideration production cost. (PEANUT/COTTON)

103. National Farm Policy

We support national farm policy that includes production price and yield loss safety nets, specialty crop block grants, producer-friendly conservation programs, permanent comprehensive disaster risk management, and long-term renewable energy benefits. (OVERSIGHT)

104. Payment Limitations

We oppose any restrictions or reductions in payment limitations, adjusted gross income (AGI) or means testing. (PEANUT/COTTON)

105. Peanut Program

In respect to the peanut program, we support:

- The \$355.72 loan rate basis grade for peanuts being the minimum net guarantee per delivered ton of farmer stock peanuts.
- All storage, handling, and other associated costs being paid by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and made available for farm-stored loans.
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) being open with the method of calculating the loan repayment rate.
- The USDA/Farm Service Agency (FSA), area associations and farmer owned cooperative-marketing associations being allowed to administer the marketing assistance loans.
- The United States Department of Agriculture Secretary allowing on farm storage loans to be available under the new Farm Bill at the growers' discretion.

- Peanut provisions to allow producers to build, buy, sell or transfer base.
- Peanuts only being made available for non-edible uses after loan maturity. (PEANUT/COTTON)

106. Producer Eligibility Determination

We support implementation of farm policy in such a manner as to minimize the disruptions to landlord-tenant relationships. We support efforts to provide the state Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee authority to determine eligibility requirements for farm program benefits. (OVERSIGHT)

107. Storage and Handling Fees

We support retaining storage and handling fees as established in the 2002 Farm Bill.

All storage, handling and other associated costs should be paid by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and made available for farm-stored loans. At a minimum, priority should be given to forfeited peanuts. (PEANUT/COTTON)

Food Safety

108. Food Inspection Program Funding

The quality of food is a public health benefit assuring safety and wholesomeness of food to all citizens, producers and consumers alike. Therefore, the cost of an inspection should be funded by general revenue. (DAIRY)

109. Food Safety

We support economically viable food safety practices to ensure a safe, wholesome, nutritious food source for the consumer.

We support the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and similar agencies in other states as the appropriate agencies for testing food to ensure wholesomeness.

We encourage all state and federal agencies and industry efforts to establish public confidence that the American food supply is wholesome and safe. We support standardization of food safety certification requirements.

Any new food safety legislation and guidelines must be science-based, must recognize the difference in regional and commodity practices and both the industry and land grant universities must be involved in the rule making and implementation process. We encourage reasonable, timely release of guidelines for producers prior to enforcement of rules and provisions for an adequate transition period.

All food safety legislation should apply equally to domestic and foreign food sources.

We encourage the education of consumers on the proper preparation, cooking and serving of all food products and on sanitary practices as part of the implementation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act. (21 USC 2201) (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

110. Sale of Raw Milk

In the interest of public safety, we oppose the sale of raw milk and raw milk products that do not meet food safety standards for human consumption.

Additionally, we highly discourage the human consumption of raw milk and raw milk products labeled as pet food. (DAIRY)

General

111. Agritourism

Agritourism should be used as a benefit to *bona-fide* agricultural operations and as an educational opportunity for the general public. (OVERSIGHT)

112. Fees

All fees imposed on agriculture should provide a benefit to the agricultural producer and should not cause an undue burden on the producer.

Fees for the purpose of protecting public health and safety should be paid by the general public and not be the burden of the agricultural producer. (OVERSIGHT)

113. Fireworks

We support strict enforcement of Florida's fireworks laws, as it pertains to use by *bona-fide* agriculture. (OVERSIGHT)

114. Florida Seed Law

We support enforcement of the current seed law and recommend the continued use of general revenue dollars in this effort. Consumer protection of seed purchases is important and needs to be continued. Trust fund revenues should not be expected to fully fund consumer-based programs.

We support maintaining a viable state seed regulatory program. (OVERSIGHT)

115. Food Recovery Program/Food Banks

We encourage growers to donate surplus food to charitable organizations who will utilize the product outside the market.

We strongly encourage the state to fund the Florida Association of Food Banks from general revenue to utilize surplus Florida farm products to feed needy Americans. We support providing grower incentive funds to cover harvest costs. (OVERSIGHT)

116. Official Language

We support English as the official language for business. (OVERSIGHT)

117. State Agricultural Response Team

We support the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) as the lead multi-agency coordination group dedicated to animal and agricultural emergency preparedness and response.

We urge continued funding for SART to enhance their local and regional response capabilities. (OVERSIGHT)

118. Unmanned Aircraft Systems

We support requiring operators of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to gain the written consent of the landowner and/or farm operator if the UAS will be surveying or gathering data above private properties. We oppose all operators, including private and local, state or federal agencies, using UAS for the purpose of regulatory enforcement, litigation and as a sole source for natural resource inventories used in planning efforts. (OVERSIGHT)

119. Weather Information

We support efforts that provide farmers and ranchers with timely and reliable weather information [e.g. Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN)]. (OVERSIGHT)

Government

120. Duplication of Regulations

To avoid duplication and keep our aquaculturalists, farmers and ranchers competitive, we oppose redundant local, state or federal laws and regulations.

We support legislation that will provide for consistent wetland interpretation to avoid duplication of regulation and permitting for *bona-fide* farm operations on lands classified as agriculture pursuant to §193.461, Florida Statutes and enrolled in the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Best Management Practices program. (OVERSIGHT)

121. Economic Impact

We support legislation that requires state and local government to consider the economic impact, before initiating new programs, rules and ordinances. (OVERSIGHT)

122. Government Supported Food Programs

When any government programs provide food or nutritional support, the food supply purchased should be from a domestic source. (OVERSIGHT)

123. State Constitution

The Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) supports a review by the State Board of Directors of all proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution. Any position taken by the State Board of Directors will be communicated to the County Farm Bureaus and the membership.

We support changes in the current ballot initiative process of amending the Florida Constitution to make the process more deliberative. (OVERSIGHT)

124. Unfunded Mandates

The Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) supports legislation that will require all laws that contain mandates be funded with an adequate state or federal appropriation to cover all costs of implementation. Unfunded mandates create a financial hardship for governmental bodies, which are forced to pass these expenses on to taxpayers and property owners.

We consider a mandate unfunded, unless the regulatory agency provides the funding for implementation. (OVERSIGHT)

Insurance

125. Citizens Insurance

We recommend the abolishment of Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. We support a free market system for property and casualty insurance in the State of Florida. (OVERSIGHT)

126. Equine Insurance

We urge the Florida Farm Bureau Insurance to provide a source of coverage for the equine industry. (EQUINE)

127. Health Insurance

We oppose government mandated employer provided health insurance.

We support the repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. (LABOR)

128. Uniform Automobile Insurance Premiums

We oppose any attempt to make automobile insurance premiums uniform throughout Florida. (OVERSIGHT)

Labor

129. Child Labor Laws

We support strict enforcement of child labor laws by proper authorities to ensure that children have a full educational experience opportunity. However, state law should not be so restrictive that secondary vocational agricultural students be prohibited from participation in internship programs. The appropriate agencies should work together to foster opportunities for vocational agriculture students in concert with the "school-to-work" initiative.

We oppose any changes to federal child labor laws. (LABOR)

130. Collective Bargaining Law

For purposes of uniformity, we strongly favor agricultural labor relations legislation at the national level rather than state legislation. Any legislation should include safeguards for workers, employers, and consumers, such as:

- requiring secret ballot elections,
- prohibiting secondary boycotts as in other industries,
- providing immediate injunctive remedies for illegal acts,
- protecting against strikes at harvest time,
- requiring continued right-to-work protection. (LABOR)

131. Employee Transportation Expenses

We oppose any regulation or court decision requiring employers to pay travel or visa costs for employees from their permanent residence to the employer's place of business except as may be required by a temporary foreign worker program in which the employer is voluntarily participating.

We oppose paying, during the first week of work, costs of any migrant employees, as these costs are not primarily for the benefit of the employers but also benefit the employee. Employers should not have to pay wages for travel time from employee residence to the place of work. (LABOR)

132. Immigration at the Federal Level

Recognizing that immigration is a federal issue, we oppose immigration legislation, ordinances or rules at the state or local level that would prevent the sustainability of Florida agriculture. (LABOR)

133. Independent Contractors

We oppose regulations that impose strict employer liability against growers who utilize *bona-fide* independent contractors. (LABOR)

134. Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts

We oppose the concept of compulsory Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (ILTA). Furthermore, ILTA grantees should not be allowed to engage in any activity precluded under legal services corporation regulations. (LABOR)

135. Labor Housing

We support an employer's ability to build farm worker housing that may be challenged by local government or citizens opposed to farm worker housing in general.

We encourage agencies that perform labor housing inspections to work with farm labor housing providers to provide safe housing and to allow them to correct problem areas in a timely manner before imposing fines. We urge public agencies to educate farm workers on housing maintenance issues. We support changes in housing funding legislation to prevent discrimination against agricultural workers. (LABOR)

136. Legal Foreign Workers

The use of legal foreign workers is critical to the sustainability of agriculture in Florida and needs to be assured, simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for agriculture.

We support a fair calculation of the Adverse Effective Wage Rate (AEWR) that reflects related occupations. (LABOR)

137. Legal Services

We support the concept of legal assistance to the poor. We particularly encourage *pro bono* work by state bar associations. While we support the concept of legal assistance, we believe that legal service grantees have acted far beyond the scope of their original mission. We support efforts to reform these abuses. (LABOR)

138. Local Labor Laws

We support state legislation that would preempt county and local government from the regulation of labor issues, including wage and hour. (LABOR)

139. Management Programs

We strongly encourage employers of farm laborers, either directly or through farm labor contractors, to pursue progressive labor management relations programs. These programs should include training, oversight and analysis of such things as working conditions, wages, housing, transportation and the general well-being of those employed. We also support the formation of a voluntary farm labor contractor certification program. (LABOR)

140. Mandated Safety Programs

We are opposed to federal or state mandatory safety programs for employers who have good safety experience ratings. (LABOR)

141. Mediation

In mediation arising from issues related to employment, we support an employer's right to face-to-face meetings. Notification of language barriers should be made to both parties prior to mediation. (LABOR)

142. Minimum Wage

We oppose an increase in the minimum wage and indexing of the minimum wage when believed to be inflationary. (LABOR)

143. Occupational Safety and Health Act

We are opposed to Florida being an Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) contract state. (LABOR)

144. Right-to-Work

We support the principle of right-to-work as a constitutional guarantee and recommend strict enforcement of and adherence to the Florida Right-to-Work Law. (LABOR)

145. Rural Child Care

We encourage public and private support of licensed child care facilities in rural areas. We commend and support the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) and other similar organizations in their efforts to provide quality child care for children of Florida agricultural workers. (LABOR)

146. Worker Centers

We support the formation of a broad-based coalition to research and surface solutions to problems farmers face when third party groups like “Worker Centers” initiate social programs that have marketing impacts on producers. (LABOR)

147. Workers Compensation

We recommend workers compensation be retained and administered by private industry and not taken over by the state or federal government.

Housing voluntarily offered by the employer that is not considered part of the worksite should not be covered by workers compensation.

We urge modification of existing statutes, which would assist in reducing the net costs of workers’ compensation to employers. Workers’ compensation is especially punitive to agricultural operations because farmers cannot pass on these costs like other industries. (LABOR)

Law & Order

148. Agricultural Crime Units

We urge county Farm Bureaus to work with their county sheriff’s department to establish ranch and agricultural crime units. (OVERSIGHT)

149. Capital Punishment

We support capital punishment as provided for in the Florida Statutes and believe that sentences under these statutes should be carried out without undue delay. Therefore, we support a system of accelerated appeals in capital cases and a time limitation for the filing of all appeals.

We oppose the use of a convicted criminal’s mental capacity as a means for prohibiting capital punishment. (OVERSIGHT)

150. Definition of Marriage

We believe marriage should be defined as a legal union only between one man and one woman as husband and wife. (OVERSIGHT)

151. Drug and Alcohol Abuse

We support and endorse efforts to stop drug and alcohol abuse with emphasis on education. We favor the strengthening of narcotic control laws.

We oppose the decriminalization of growing, selling or processing of any illegal substances. (OVERSIGHT)

152. Litter Laws

We recommend strict enforcement of current litter laws and recommend legislation that removes private landowners' responsibility, liability and cost of disposal for illegally dumped refuse on their land. (OVERSIGHT)

153. Support of the Second Amendment

We support the right of American citizens to own and use firearms as provided for in the Second Amendment.

We oppose any effort that would infringe on this right. (OVERSIGHT)

154. Treatment of Criminals

We oppose the pampering of criminals and the furnishing of elaborate and unnecessary prison facilities.

We recommend firm and mandatory sentences for criminal acts, and we oppose the use of plea bargaining to simply expedite court caseloads. The state's uniform sentencing guidelines are currently too lenient regarding mandatory sentences for major crimes and repeat offenders and we urge these guidelines be strengthened. (OVERSIGHT)

155. Trespass and Theft

We continue to support strict enforcement of the Florida trespass law and any changes that would strengthen the law. Criminal penalties for failure to comply with § 472.029, Florida Statutes, should be established by the Florida Legislature.

We encourage law enforcement agencies to vigorously enforce agricultural theft and vandalism laws. (OVERSIGHT)

Marketing

156. Citrus Promotion and Marketing

We should continue to work with the citrus industry in promoting the sale of fresh and processed citrus products in various forms. Continued emphasis is needed on developing new marketing concepts for all Florida citrus. We support the collection of marketing assessments from citrus imports. These programs should promote the beneficial attributes of both foreign and domestic origin so long as they are equally financed by all parties selling product in the U.S. (CITRUS)

157. Country of Origin Labeling

We support Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) that conforms with COOL parameters and meets World Trade Organization (WTO) requirements. Costs should not be burdensome to agricultural producers. (TRADE)

158. Florida Agricultural Promotion Support

We urge producers to join and participate in the "Fresh from Florida" promotion program.

We support and encourage the expansion of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Farm to School program.

We encourage the standardization of the Farm to School program across all Florida counties.

We strongly encourage the education of consumers about the benefits of Florida agriculture, especially fresh Florida produce. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

159. Marketing Florida Citrus Juice

The Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) should encourage processors to market and identify 100% pure Florida citrus juice product. (CITRUS)

160. State Farmers' Markets

We recommend that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) encourage brokers in the state farmers' market system handle and promote Florida-grown products. We also recommend that changes made in the state farmers' market system are beneficial to producers. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE)

Pests & Diseases

161. Agricultural Emergency Declarations

We support the Commissioner of Agriculture's right to declare an agricultural emergency. We further recommend that just compensation should be given for agricultural material that is destroyed under such an emergency.

We support the continuation of an agricultural emergency trust fund as established under current law. (OVERSIGHT)

162. Agricultural Inspections at Ports of Entry

We support the transfer of authority for agricultural inspections at U.S. ports of entry from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS). (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

163. Boll Weevil Program

We support the boll weevil program and support state help for this program. (PEANUT/COTTON)

164. Brucellosis

We urge the continuation of calftub vaccinations for heifers. (BEEF) (DAIRY)

165. Caribfly-free Zones

We urge the expansion of Caribfly-free zones and the necessary research for that expansion. (CITRUS)

166. Equine Diseases

Several diseases threaten Florida's equine industry. We support legislation allowing the administration of approved medication for the treatment of Equine Protozoal Myelitis in horses competing in the state. We support the ability of horse owners to purchase vaccines and vaccinate their own horses for West Nile Virus and other infectious diseases. (EQUINE)

167. Feral Hog and Invasive Plant Control on Public Lands

We urge public land managers to use all measures necessary to control the overpopulation of feral hogs and invasive plant species. Feral hogs threaten the environment, wildlife and public health. Feral hogs also cause significant economic damage to private property.

We support state and federal funds for the research to control the overpopulation of feral hogs. (OVERSIGHT)

168. Foreign and Domestic Diseases

We urge state and federal agencies to more closely monitor all foreign and domestic diseases and pests that could endanger United States agriculture and wildlife.

We support Plum Island as our first choice Bio Safety Level 4 (BSL4) Research Facility. Should they not be selected, we still support the construction of a class BSL4 Research Facility to serve the United States livestock industry. (BEEF)

169. Invasive Pest Plants

We support the scientific recognition of pest plants using the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Invasive Plant Assessment and support the control and eradication of pest plants identified on the official state of Florida noxious weed list. We support the development of state and federal funding for the evaluation, control and eradication of defined pest plants. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

170. Livestock Disease

We support increased United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding for livestock disease surveillance and control. (BEEF)

171. Management of Citrus Diseases

We support continued citrus research and the development of management plans that help growers manage and control pests and diseases. All findings should be made readily available to growers.

We urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to base their regulations strictly on conclusive science. These regulations should be practical, economical and include industry input in their adoption. We encourage these regulatory agencies to look for ways to achieve compliance through education rather than fines and penalties. (CITRUS)

172. Plant and Animal Pests and Diseases

Invasive plant pests and animal diseases pose a serious threat to all Floridians. Florida is a sentinel state for pest introductions and should receive increased focus and support to strengthen our pest protection efforts. Pest and disease exclusion should be the top priority for state and federal agencies with regulatory authority for invasives. Additional emphasis should be placed on the inspection of solid wood packaging material and other known sources of invasive pests.

We support the creation of state and federal funding sources, for the eradication and control of plant and animal pests and diseases that are not tied to annual budgeting requirements. We support increased agency cooperation to reduce duplication among the various agencies. We support increased penalties for smuggling of agricultural products. Increased emphasis on education for all stakeholders is necessary to protect our natural resources in the future. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

173. Protection Against Imported Pests and Diseases

The United States Department of Agriculture/Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding should be sufficient to ensure adequate facilities and resources for the sampling and inspection of all imported agricultural products to detect and prevent the introduction of pests and diseases entering at all ports of entry. Improvements to infrastructure, facilities and shared database technology must become a priority for both agencies.

We encourage the establishment of verifiable pre-inspection programs at the point of origin.

We encourage the increased inspection of all loads of imported agricultural products to ensure that these products comply with U.S. standards. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

174. Quarantines

Quarantines restricting the interstate and intrastate movement of agricultural products should be based on conclusive science.

We support a revision of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) pre and post-harvest treatment manuals relating to quarantines. (CITRUS)

175. Strengthening of Quarantine 37

We believe the biological foundation of Quarantine 37 should never be compromised, as it is the first line of defense against the introduction of foreign pests and diseases. We support changes that strengthen the intent of Quarantine 37. These changes should be developed with full industry involvement.

We support adequate funding from state and federal agencies for inspection officials to enforce a strengthened Quarantine 37.

We believe that producers of plant material for import into the U.S. should be held to a responsible standard in utilizing practices that meet phytosanitary standards of the United States. (ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE)

176. Trichomoniasis

We recommend any new rules regarding trichomoniasis testing in the transportation of bulls across state lines be uniform throughout the Southeast. (BEEF)

Property Rights/Land Management

177. Eminent Domain

When agricultural lands are acquired through eminent domain, agricultural producers shall be paid for land value and business damages. The legal basis for an eminent domain taking of private property should not be solely to increase the taxable value of the property. (OVERSIGHT)

178. Jurisdictional Wetlands

We oppose any expansion of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) authority pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) beyond that which it has historically exercised over water of the United States, which did not include isolated wetlands. We urge legislation to clarify the ACOE's regulatory authority, specifically excluding isolated wetlands. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

179. Less-than-Fee Acquisition

As a result of a very aggressive land acquisition program, the state has greatly increased the amount of publicly owned land. We believe that any future land acquisitions should be restricted to less-than-fee simple acquisitions such as the purchase of development rights or conservation easements or agricultural easements. In addition, state, regional and local governments should coordinate funding for acquisitions in order to leverage tax dollars and seek federal matching funds where applicable.

We support less-than-fee acquisitions, either perpetual, or for a specific term of years, as long as they are voluntary, incentive-based and allow for the continued economically viable use of the property for agriculture. We do not support public access without consent of the landowner.

We feel that state land conservation programs that focus on less-than-fee acquisitions offer the state, the conservation community and the landowner a win-win situation because:

- a. limited state financial resources can be stretched further;
- b. the private landowner maintains the stewardship of the property saving taxpayer dollars that would otherwise be necessary for management;
- c. the land stays on the tax rolls; and
- d. economic activity continues on the property. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

180. Private Property Rights

We strongly believe in and uphold the sanctity of private property rights upon which this country was founded. Short of constituting a public health hazard, property owners should be allowed and encouraged to use their property for their own benefit. (OVERSIGHT)

181. Public Lands Management

Government agencies purchasing land should establish and implement management guidelines and criteria for purchased lands in a timely manner. We encourage the State of Florida to generate a single, accurate, and complete inventory of all publicly owned lands within the State.

Agriculture should be given priority as a land management tool that would allow those lands to be available for lease and management (e.g. grazing, silvopasture, or forestry entities). The governing bodies should provide that income from public lands, when legislatively approved, be utilized for management and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT).

We support the sale of surplus public lands back into private ownership.

When lands are acquired for a specific public purpose, but not used for that purpose within a reasonable time, the prior owners, or their heirs should have the right of first refusal to purchase the surplus land. (OVERSIGHT)

182. Range Lands

We recommend legislation that would require utilization of public land for historically sound agricultural purpose recognizing the environmental and societal benefits of grazing livestock. We recommend increased public education, on-site technical assistance, extension and research dealing with range use and management on public and private lands. (BEEF)

183. Sovereign Lands

We support the historical ordinary high water mark and navigable waters as established when Florida received statehood. We oppose any changes to the law or state agency policy that would adversely affect private property rights. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

Research

184. Apiculture Research

We recommend research be funded at the state and federal levels on honey bee health and husbandry.

Considering the severity of damage caused by pests to Florida's apiary industry, the State of Florida should provide adequate long term funding to maintain the continuity of relevant bee research programs at Florida's universities.

We support the investigations conducted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) that assist the apiary industry. (APICULTURE)

185. Biotechnology

We continue to support conventional and biotech agriculture research and public education on biotechnology.

We oppose a requirement to label biotech products.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) should be the lead agency responsible for all transgenic crops and animals. (OVERSIGHT)

186. Citrus Research

We urge continuance of the citrus quality research now being conducted industry-wide including, but not limited to, genetic enhancement of present and future varieties and rootstocks.

The Florida citrus industry, working with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and other agencies should develop and secure funding for a high priority program to genetically map and patent the citrus genetic code so as to enhance the returns to Florida citrus growers. (CITRUS)

187. Forest Products

We support the exploration and development of new markets (e.g. energy) for forestry and forest products through research and extension. (FORESTRY)

188. Forestry Research and Extension Programs

We support increased funding, improved accountability and more progressive and aggressive forestry research, instruction and extension programs at the University of Florida aimed at increasing forest productivity, health and stewardship through genetics, biotechnology, forested wetland ecology, silvicultural practices, integrated pest management and economic development. (FORESTRY)

189. Ownership of Research

We oppose selling any agricultural product under development by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) prior to licensing. However, we do support the right to license developed products. (OVERSIGHT)

190. Research on Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture

State resources must be reallocated for marine and fresh water aquaculture research for focused programs addressing the pressing needs of the commercial aquaculture industry as identified by the Aquaculture Review Council.

We encourage research that focuses on aquaculture and its positive impact upon the state's environment, including the utilization of aquaculture effluent waters and sustainability. (AQUACULTURE)

Risk Management

191. Disaster Program Payments

We recommend that when a disaster program is initiated, guidelines for program integrity should be implemented.

Any disaster program should be designed to take into account timeliness and not be discriminatory to diversified operations. Disaster payments should be exempted from payment limitations. (PEANUT/COTTON)

192. Federal Crop Insurance/Risk Management

We recommend expansion of federal crop insurance programs and catastrophic insurance programs to include currently excluded crops, such as, plant starter materials and in-ground material. We further recommend that the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation keep the farm serial number as the identification of our insurable unit. We recommend a more equitable average assessed of formidable yields in disaster years for consideration by the Actual Production History (APH).

All federally-backed crop insurance programs should include a quarantine rider option.

We recommend the development of a risk management program or self-insured program for farmers, similar to Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs).

We recommend that current cotton coverage be expanded to insure for actual loss due to wind or hail damage. Crop insurance should be experience-rated for premium and availability. All crops should be eligible for quality losses.

We support the development and availability of revenue-based insurance programs for all commodities.

In addition, we support increasing the funds allocated to the Livestock Gross Margin Program which is managed by the United States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency (USDA/RMA) to allow for greater participation by livestock producers in Florida. (PEANUT/COTTON)

Tax

193. Agricultural Land Classification (Greenbelt)

We recognize the intent of Florida's agricultural land classification and assessment law to be the maintenance of the economic viability of agriculture. We continue to support the law's strict application of *bona-fide*, good faith commercial agriculture and forestry operations. The commercial agricultural use of the land must be a primary consideration when determining entitlement to agricultural classification.

We are opposed to an ad-valorem recapture tax.

Property that has a land use designation of agriculture, timber or aquaculture does not burden local government services to the same extent as urban and suburban lands and therefore should not be taxed or assessed at the same level as urban properties with other land use designations to support those services.

We support incentives to agricultural producers from municipal and county governments and special taxing districts to allow agricultural property to remain in agriculture.

We urge property appraisers to utilize a consistent application of existing laws when determining agricultural classifications. (TAX)

194. Conservation Easements

We support conservation easements for less than perpetuity to be available to farmers and ranchers with a federal tax deduction available.

We support increased funding for the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program. (TAX)

195. Federal Tax Reform

We support elimination of the Federal Estate Tax or support unlimited special use valuation of agricultural land.

We support the elimination of the Federal Alternative Minimum Tax.

We support balancing the federal budget and eliminating the national debt.

We support amending the U.S. Constitution to require a balanced budget and to liquidate federal assets to pay down the national debt. For any increase of federal taxes, we support a requirement of a 3/4 majority vote in both houses of Congress.

We oppose cost of living tax adjustments on federal income tax or benefits because of locations.

We support the continued deduction of sales tax from federal income tax.

We support reasonable and just tax reform of the Federal Tax Code. The changes should not cause undue additional taxes or increase costs to agriculture.

We oppose the value-added tax.

We support the stepped-up basis for the gifts of agricultural property and the elimination of the gift tax on gifts of properties that remain in agricultural production. (TAX)

196. Fee Reduction

We support a reduction in the registration fee for seed dealers to a level that continues to allow for inspection, sampling, compliance, enforcement and analysis.

We support a reduction in the fees for the weights and measures commercial use permit. (TAX)

197. Local Preemption

We support the Agricultural Lands and Practices Act to preempt local governments from taxing or assessing fees on agriculture lands or operations.

We oppose any fees for counties or municipalities on buildings on farms.

We oppose any special local or state fee or assessment on farms including special taxing districts.

We support the firm definition of a tax from government. The goal of a definition is to remove ambiguous language for fees and assessments which are, in fact, taxes. (TAX)

198. Municipal Service Districts

We oppose the taxation of land that does not specifically benefit from taxes levied under municipal service districts and municipal or county taxing districts. We support sunset provisions of five years for special municipal districts. We support boards who are elected by property owners in that district. We believe all special districts should be accountable. We affirm the right of private landowners to establish special agricultural taxing districts based on the one-vote-per-acre principle to tax themselves to address specific issues. (TAX)

199. Payment in Lieu of Taxes

We support §259.0322, Florida Statutes, the reimbursement to local governments when private lands are purchased by public agencies and also support payments of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) to other local governments not covered by the statute.

We recommend that any government agency or water management district that purchases land to be held in reserve or to be protected should be required to pay a property equalization tax on this property to the local county commission, school board and other governmental units normally funded from ad valorem taxes so that the local tax impact is minimized.

The burden should be placed on the entity purchasing the land to notify the appropriate taxing districts to ensure the funds are paid.

We support changing the formula that requires any state or regional agency to reimburse counties for any lost tax revenues as the result of acquisition of land, so that all counties are included. (TAX)

200. State Sales Tax Exemptions

We recommend that the state statute which deals with livestock feed, §588.13, Florida Statutes be amended to include rabbits raised commercially for consumption in the definition of livestock.

We support a phase-out of sales and use tax for all inputs for farms.

We support sales tax exemptions on buildings and structures that can only be used for agricultural purposes.

We oppose any change in the Florida Retail Sales Tax Law, which would result in multiple taxation. We support the exemptions under the present tax law on materials which are used to produce or manufacture consumer products.

We support the enhancement of agricultural energy exemptions.

We recommend that no sales tax be collected on any fuels if such tax is refundable to the farmer.

To keep Florida competitive with other states, we need a livestock sales tax exemption for out-of-state buyers that allow a reasonable amount of time in which to ship purchased livestock out of state.

We are opposed to constitutional referendums that mandate sales tax exemption reviews. (TAX)

201. State Tax Reform

We urge government on all levels to eliminate wasteful financial practices and improve accountability before giving any consideration to the concept of raising taxes.

We oppose a state personal income tax.

We oppose the adoption of a gross-receipts tax by the Florida Legislature.

We oppose a state personal income tax on Sub-chapter S corporations and partnerships.

When a clear and demonstrated public need for additional revenues has been proven, we favor a revenue other than an ad-valorem tax.

We are opposed to sales tax on insurance premiums and agents' commissions and we oppose any extension or expansion of sales tax on services.

State unemployment compensation trust funds should be kept at a reasonable level.

We oppose tangible personal property taxes on farm equipment.

We oppose any further sales taxes imposed on tobacco products that are sold in Florida, due to the fact that more taxes would be a detriment to the financial stability of the tobacco growers in the State of Florida. (TAX)

202. Timber Casualty Losses and Reforestation

For forest landowners the current tax code should be amended to provide income averaging, to further reduce capital gains tax rates, and to allow up to \$20,000 of reforestation expenses to be expensed in the year the expenses are incurred. The tax code should also provide for reasonable casualty loss for agricultural uses. We favor no change in the current treatment of tax-deferred exchanges of property under Section 1031 of the Internal Revenue Code. (FORESTRY) (TAX)

Trade

203. Agricultural Products from Cuba

We oppose the importation of any agricultural products from Cuba until there is an acceptable government. (TRADE)

204. Citrus Tariffs

In international trade negotiations, we support efforts to maintain U.S. tariffs on imported fresh and processed citrus products.

We support the use of citrus tariff revenues for funding pest and disease research and associated product development. (CITRUS) (TRADE)

205. Export Programs

We favor federal funding for export promotion programs. (TRADE)

206. Foreign Agriculture Enterprise

We strongly oppose any state, federal or international programs that will encourage foreign agriculture enterprises to compete directly against our domestic farmers. (TRADE)

207. Health Protocols for Trade

We support the continued development and education between the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) trade negotiators and an importing country's regulatory agency to include the most current proven technologies in health protocols for agricultural imports (ie. "in-vitro" frozen embryos, blue tongue, etc.). (TRADE)

208. Import Relief for Perishable Products

We favor the development, enactment and timely enforcement of regulations such as production, volume or price triggers that would deal with the dumping (on a rapid and timely basis) of foreign perishable commodities into the U. S. No open or consigned loads should be allowed to be imported. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE) (TRADE)

209. International Trade

We support free and fair trade.

Any modifications to our domestic trade policy and tariff schedules should be done through multilateral negotiations. Any modifications should be compatible with current farm programs.

We support legislation to prevent circumvention of domestic trade policy and tariff schedules.

Import sensitive crops (i.e., citrus, specialty crops and sugar) should not be negotiated on a bilateral or regional basis.

Future trade negotiations should take into account advantages that are realized by foreign producers through subsidies, differential chemical use, labor costs, and environmental, labor or safety standards.

Human rights requirements should not be tied to trade agreements.

We oppose tariff reduction if it results in creating an oligopoly.

We should not sacrifice our domestic producers to gain export markets for certain commodities. A successful conclusion to the multilateral Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations should be our highest trade priority.

We oppose Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) for the President to negotiate bilateral and regional trade agreements.

Any trade agreement should include strict measures to control the spread of noxious plants, insects and animal pests. Quarantine protection from pests and disease should not be compromised in any trade negotiations.

We oppose the importation of any fresh, chilled or frozen meat products from countries not free of Foot and Mouth Disease.

We urge all appropriate state and federal agencies to strictly enforce current regulations to insure that imported products are not re-packed or re-labeled as a product of the U. S.

We favor the development and enactment of regulations that would provide relief from import surges of foreign commodities due to extreme foreign currency devaluations.

Trade relief within free trade agreements should be negotiated to protect regional producers of fresh fruits, vegetables and nursery products.

We oppose the Generalized System of Preference (GSP).

Should a trade embargo or restriction be declared for national security reasons, the embargo should be total and apply to all products and services.

We support immediate, unrestricted trade and distribution of U.S. approved biotech products. (TRADE)

210. Non-Tariff Barriers

We oppose non-tariff barriers which restrict or hamper the sale of U.S. agriculture products and processed agriculture products in foreign markets. Efforts should be expanded to remove non-tariff barriers in place on U.S. agriculture products going into foreign markets. (TRADE)

211. Patent Protection

We support strict enforcement of patent protection and harsh punishment for those countries or individuals who violate patents. (OVERSIGHT)

212. Producer Export Sales

We support measures that would better protect producers who export agricultural commodities to other countries, with regard to grades and standards, pesticide residue regulations and provisions for prompt payment.

We support the international recognition of United States food safety standards. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE) (TRADE)

Transportation

213. Agricultural Transportation Exemptions

We support current exemptions for agriculture regarding commercial transportation requirements. We encourage the Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) to work with the agencies responsible for enforcing transportation laws to understand agriculture's exemptions. (OVERSIGHT)

214. Emergency Hauling Exemptions

We support exemptions or permits for agricultural commodities that would allow oversized and/or overweight shipments to be transported on highways for necessary movement under emergency conditions. (OVERSIGHT)

Water/Natural Resources

GENERAL

215. Air Quality Standards

Particulate matter from agricultural sources should be excluded from the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Without conclusive scientific evidence indicating that particulate matter from farm and ranch operations adversely affects public health, we oppose any mandatory air quality standards for ozone and particulate matter for agricultural operations. We oppose any attempt to regulate methane emissions from ruminant animals under the Clean Air Act or any other legislative vehicle; and air permits for agricultural operations that are not science-based. We recommend further research into emission factors for particulate matter for agricultural operations. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

216. Conservation Programs

We continue to educate our members on state and federal cost-share opportunities. We are also seeking ways to mitigate or ease the economic burden placed on growers that participate in these programs. We support private landowners having priority to receive available federal cost-share funds. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

217. Cost Share Programs

Any mandatory environmental regulatory program must be accompanied with cost-share funding equivalent to an amount historically provided. In addition, environmental enhancements can be cost-shared without the need for a conservation plan. (DAIRY)

218. Dipping Vats

We recommend that federal agencies absolve present and past landowners and operators from liability and cost of cleanup or damages from dipping vat sites which were established under a federally mandated program from tick eradication affecting 985 counties and 14 states. (BEEF)

219. Depredating Animals

Due to the severe economic damage caused by depredating animals to the aquaculture and agriculture industry, we encourage cooperation between state and federal agencies and producers to resolve wildlife issues impacting the industry. In addition, we support the development and funding of wildlife reimbursement programs created to compensate producers for loss due to depredating animals. (OVERSIGHT)

220. Endangered Species Act

We oppose rules unreasonable and harmful to agriculture concerning listed species. Any implementation should be postponed until further study and more user input can be provided.

We support the immediate “delisting” of those species that have reestablished viable population according to established population models and survey methods developed by the appropriate state, federal, or international governing authority. In the event a species is delisted, we oppose any new or retroactive regulation that may be more restrictive or burdensome than previously required under listed species designation.

We oppose U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) mediation and settlement of third party litigation to list species without notice to, and participation by, all regulated stakeholders. Prior to FWS, state or local agency proposing a

species be listed, we urge that a thorough investigation using sound scientific methods be made by that agency that accounts for economic impact of the new regulations upon a region. The agency should allow enhanced opportunity for public input by affected landowners.

We are adamantly opposed to introduction, re-introduction or interstate transfer of listed species that may pose any threat to humans, domestic livestock or native wildlife (i.e., cougars, panthers, wolves, etc.). We support compensation for losses experienced by farmers and ranchers related to predation by listed species or environmental management decisions driven by the protection of those species.

Any reintroduction of listed species on public lands should be classed as an experimental population and not be protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) if the species moves onto private lands.

Any rewrite of the ESA should include economic effects as a consideration in the listing of a species. The rewrite should address individual species, and include a landowner incentive program. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

221. Environmental Mandates and Restoration

Environmental mandates or any other governmental entity's regulatory management of agriculture must be based on sound, scientific data. Further, we recommend that in cases where an agricultural industry will be affected and removed as an accused source of pollution, that the area in question be monitored to ascertain if the removal will rectify the problem.

We encourage legislation that provides fast track recourse for landowners who are unjustly slandered or adversely affected by environmental mandates or restoration projects.

No single sector of the economy should pay a disproportionate share of the cost of any ecosystem restoration program. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

222. Environmental Self Audit

We support voluntary environmental self-audits conducted with the intention of preventing and correcting noncompliance, as well as identifying pollution prevention opportunities that will assure not only more effective implementation of environmental laws, but faster correction of compliance problems which put the environment at risk. The environmental audit and documents related to an environmental self-audit should be confidential. We support legislation prohibiting the use of self-audit documents and reporting by third parties as a basis for citizen enforcement and nuisance suits. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

223. Environmental Stewardship Certification

We support the Environmental Stewardship Certification program as a vehicle for encouraging incentive-based cost-share programs throughout the state. The Environmental Stewardship Certification is a three part program consisting of quality assurance, education and County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) recognition. Within the Environmental Stewardship Certification program, the Florida Farm Bureau's CARES program plays an integral role of recognizing farmers for their environmental stewardship. We support coordination through the CARES program to better educate the public on conservation provided by agriculture. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

224. Growth Management

Agricultural lands should be protected by incentives which ensure the economic viability of agricultural activities. The Rural and Family Lands Protection Act and sector plans are good examples of incentive-based growth management programs.

We continue to urge the Florida Legislature and Governor to support and establish a funding mechanism at the state level and to support cost sharing with participating local governments. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

225. Incentive-Based Environmental Programs

We support incentive-based environmental programs and cost-share programs for agricultural operations that replace command-and-control type regulatory programs while providing positive environmental benefits. Implementation of best management practices through federal or state cost-share programs that conserve or save water through the development or use of alternative water supplies shall not result in a loss of those permitted quantities conserved or saved from traditional sources. The Suwannee River Partnership is a good example of a progressive alternative to the traditional permitting approach. It has resulted in greater environmental compliance of more agriculture operations in less time than any previous regulatory program utilized in Florida.

We support the continuation of funding for Operation Cleansweep by the Florida Legislature. We support the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) as the lead agency in cooperation with other public/private entities. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

226. Indemnification of Losses

We support the indemnification by any federal government agency for losses in the agriculture or aquaculture industry due to quarantines', kill orders' or other market interruptions. (OVERSIGHT)

227. Mineral Rights

We support legislation that would require all mineral rights that have not been exercised by the non-fee owner of a parcel of land automatically be reverted to the fee owner after a period of ten (10) years from severance of the mineral estate from the surficial estate in the public records.

On agricultural lands where mineral rights are being exercised, legislation should provide that surficial property owners be compensated by the mineral rights holder for all property and environmental damages, including crop and pasture losses caused by mineral extraction or processing on the surficial owner's property.

We support science-based legislation protecting surficial landowners from any adverse effects of subterranean activity or terrestrial practices associated with oil, gas, or mineral extraction. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

228. Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act Title III

The federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Title III should be amended to require notification and reporting of agricultural facilities under Section 302 only if such facilities produce or store Extremely Hazardous Substances above the Threshold Planning Quantity.

We recommend elimination of the \$5/per employee fee.

We recommend a one-time activation fee with the agriculture entity being exempt from any fee or tax in the future and a simplified application and process. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

WATER

229. Agricultural Exemptions

We recommend the Florida Legislature require those agencies that promulgate surface water rules recognize the provisions of §373.406, Florida Statutes, exempting agricultural activities. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

230. Alternative Water Supply

We strongly encourage research into alternative water sources. We support legislation and policies that encourage or require urban and public water utilities to utilize and enhance water supplies through alternative sources, but usage shall not result in a loss of permitted quantities.

We encourage appropriation of state matching funds to support alternative water supply projects.

We support water storage on private lands when the property owner is adequately compensated and held harmless from state and federal wetland and species regulations for such actions. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

231. Competing Uses

The Florida Legislature carefully delineated requirements for water planning and placed an emphasis on water resource and water supply development, including funding for new alternative water supplies in §186.003(7), Florida Statutes.

We support the immediate implementation of these programs by the water management districts to avoid the need for competing water use applications. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

232. Everglades Restoration Programs

We support continuation of agricultural production in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), the C-139 basin and the Northern Everglades. We support the Everglades Forever Act, the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), the Integrated Delivery Schedule, and the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project (collectively, the Everglades Restoration Programs). Any changes made in the Everglades Restoration Programs must be based on sound, scientific evidence and a cost-benefit analysis.

We support balanced implementation of the Everglades Restoration Programs in a manner that provides for water-related needs of the region, including the enhancement of water supply while maintaining flood control.

We support the continued implementation of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Best Management Practices (BMPs) throughout the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee watersheds to reduce nutrient loading to the lake and estuaries. (SUGAR) (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

233. Existing Users

We support the existing statutory provisions in §373.233 (2), Florida Statutes, giving preference to renewal applications and §373.171 (2 and 3), Florida Statutes, relating to protecting the rights of existing users. Any rules or policies adopted by the water management districts shall comply with these provisions.

Existing legal users' rights to permit renewals should be strengthened. In the event that two or more competing applications qualify under the provisions of §373.233 (1), Florida Statutes, the governing board or the department should give preference to a renewal application over a new application. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

234. Federal Clean Water Act

We encourage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to continue working with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), States and agricultural organizations toward the goals of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). We also encourage the EPA to recognize functionally equivalent programs for agricultural non-point source discharges as a means to protect and improve water quality. We support the establishment of incentive based Best Management Practice (BMPs) programs adopted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) pursuant to state law and further support the continuation of the Clean Water Act (CWA) exemption for agricultural discharges.

We oppose any attempt to broaden the jurisdiction of the CWA to re-define waters formerly considered isolated as Waters of the United States. We oppose EPA and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) mediation and settlement of third party litigation to implement and enforce the provisions of the CWA without notice and participation by all regulated stakeholders. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

235. Fees, Fines and Taxes

We oppose any increases in permitting fees by the water management districts. In the event of permit fee increases, agricultural fees should be separate and held at a lower level.

We oppose water management districts' seeking legislative authority to create an administrative fine system.

We oppose the use of *ad-valorem* taxes for the purchase of property.

We oppose water user fees or any self-supplied water use tax. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

236. Flood Control/Excess Water

Due to the importance of flood control protection to the citizens of Florida, flood control projects and systems of locks and dams shall be preserved and not materially diminished without specific legislative approval. We support the public investment in the maintenance, repair and replacement of drainage and flood control infrastructure in accordance with adopted plans.

We oppose rules and regulations that prevent the removal of excess water from agricultural lands, and that agriculture retain the right to remove excess water in an economically feasible manner to maximize production. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

237. Gulf of Mexico Program

We support and encourage the right of states to develop a volunteer plan of action, particularly the development and implementation of Best Management Practices, to address the agricultural non-point source portion of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Gulf of Mexico Program. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

238. Lake Okeechobee

We support Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule Management and alternatives that maximize protection of the water use community's existing permitted water allocations that minimize the potential for short-term water supply shortages and assure the predictability of a continued and reliable water supply.

We support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) use of flexibility provided within the current Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS2008) to allow the lake elevation to rise towards the end of the summer rainy season thus providing sufficient water supply to users during the dry season.

The Everglades Forever Act mandates that 298 Districts be allowed to pump 20% of excess supply into Lake Okeechobee in times of a water emergency. We support recognition that water emergencies include both flooding and drought relief. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

239. Lake Okeechobee Augmentation

We support the South Florida Water Management District's authority to replenish Lake Okeechobee's water supply from other available sources as it deems necessary, including the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA). (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

240. Local Sources First

We support the "local sources first" statute § 373.223(3) (a-g), Florida Statutes, and philosophy in regional water supply planning statewide. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

241. Long Term Permitting

We strongly encourage the water management districts to issue agricultural water use permits for a duration of twenty (20) years as authorized by § 373.236, Florida Statutes. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

242. Metering and Monitoring

We should cooperate with the water management districts to obtain accurate water use data. We support legislation designating water use data as a confidential business record. However, we oppose the mandatory metering and testing of wells on private property. When such metering and monitoring are required by any governmental agency, that agency should underwrite the total cost of those programs and growers should be allowed to use reasonable alternative methods when appropriate. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

243. Minimum Flows and Levels

Understanding that a healthy aquifer, spring or stream flow is important to a sufficient water supply for agriculture, we support the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and water management districts' utilizing sound science and peer review in establishing and adopting Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) and recovery strategies. MFL modeling must account for accurate consumption from agricultural sources and should be reviewed with impacted agriculturalists. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

244. Mobile Irrigation Labs

We support the state's network of agricultural Mobile Irrigation Labs (MILs) and further support making these services available at no charge to participating growers. MILs perform valuable evaluations on irrigation systems and are extremely important to existing water conservation efforts and emerging policies therein. We support the expansion of the MIL network with emphasis on areas where Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) have been established. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

245. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits for Agricultural Chemical Applications

We support legislation clarifying that no National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are required for legally applied agricultural chemicals. (FRUIT/VEGETABLE) (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

246. Payment for Environmental Services

We support voluntary payment for environmental services programs which allow for diversification and sustainability of agricultural operations and provide environmental benefits such as dispersed water storage, filtration, and wildlife habitat. Contracts for these environmental services programs should contain provisions that allow the land to revert back to the original condition, without penalty, or additional state or federal permit requirements for the agricultural operation or landowner. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

247. Petitions by Third Parties

Water use permit holders who legally hold and use permits should not be harassed by frivolous challenges by third parties during the permit renewal process. Third party petitioners should bear the burden of proof of harm or negative impact caused by the permit holder. We encourage the water management districts to defend the permitting process from nuisance petitions filed by third parties. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

248. Potable Water Testing

It is not reasonable to require installation of costly and complex systems to treat potable water based solely on the number of consumers/workers a business serves/employs, particularly when no real threat to public safety exists. The rules for primary inorganic, volatile organic and other chemical sampling are so complex that there should be a burden on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the health departments to minimize sampling requirements. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

249. Water Quality

Agricultural practices should be protective of surface and ground water quality. We support a presumption of compliance with state water quality standards in §373.4595, 403.067, 576.045 and 597.004, Florida Statutes, and release from liability as provided by §576.045 (4), Florida Statutes, for producers who have implemented

appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) on their operation. We support continuing the self-tax on fertilizer for BMPs research.

If required by permit conditions, we support the simplification of testing procedures and justification for water quality so as to reduce the unusual burden and expense to the agricultural community.
(WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

250. Water Use Permit Relocation

We support the ability of an agricultural water use (consumptive use) permittee to relocate their water use permit, consistent with permit criteria with no penalty or loss of allocated quantities, based on the permit maintaining the same ownership, use and quantity of the existing permit. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

251. Wellhead Protection

We oppose the development of wellhead protection ordinances or rules by local governments. If, however, wellhead protection is necessary, only the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the water management districts should develop rules based on sound science and peer-reviewed criteria.
(WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS

252. Regional Management and District Boundaries

We support the continued regional management of water resources through the water management districts with no consolidation at the state level. Without scientific and public policy justification, we oppose any change in current water management district boundaries. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

253. Water Management Districts

We support legislative, regulatory and administrative efforts to simplify, streamline and make water management districts more responsive to the water needs of local communities and their citizens.
(WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

254. Water Management District Agriculture Teams

We support the Water Management Districts continuing use of Ag Teams. These Ag Teams consist of water management district personnel who specialize in agricultural related permitting, water resource, flood control, and environmental restoration issues. We encourage water management district Ag Teams to serve as liaisons to the agriculture community. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

255. Water Management District Boards

We urge the Governor to appoint water management district board members with commercial agricultural backgrounds, and we support continuing the process of appointments by the Governor rather than elected board members.

We support the retention of basin boards of the water management districts as described in § 373.0693, Florida Statutes. (WATER/NATURAL RESOURCES)

Abbreviated Terms

ACOE	Army Corps of Engineers
AEWR	Adverse Effect Wage Rate
AFBF	American Farm Bureau Federation
AGI	Adjusted Gross Income
AITC	Ag in the Classroom
APH	Actual Production History
APHIS	Animal Plant Health Inspection Service
ARS	Agricultural Research Service
BSL4	Bio Safety Level 4
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CARES	County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship
CCC	Commodity Credit Corporation
CEPP	Central Everglades Planning Project
CERP	Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan
COOL	Country of Origin Labeling
CPBM	Certified Prescribed Burn Managers
CWA	Clean Water Act
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOC	Department of Citrus
DPI	Division of Plant Industry
EAA	Everglades Agricultural Area
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAME	Florida Alligator Marketing and Education
FAWN	Florida Automated Weather Network
FCC	Florida Citrus Commission
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FDACS	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
FCA	Florida Cattlemen's Association
FFBF	Florida Farm Bureau Federation
FFA	The National FFA Organization
FFS	Florida Forest Service
FSBA	Florida State Beekeepers Association
FQPA	Food Quality Protection Act
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
GAPs	Good Agricultural Practices

GSP	Generalized System of Preference
ILTA	Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRAs	Individual Retirement Accounts
IOS	International Organization for Standardization
LGM-Dairy	Livestock Gross Margin-Dairy
MFLs	Minimum Flows and Levels
MILs	Mobile Irrigation Labs
MPP-Dairy	Margin Protection Program-Dairy
MUMS	Minor Use Minor Species
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	National Resources Conservation Service
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Act
PACA	Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act
PILT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
RCMA	Redlands Christian Migrant Association
RMA	Risk Management Agency
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SART	State Agricultural Response Team
TMDLs	Total Maximum Daily Loads
TPA	Trade Promotion Authority
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft Systems
UF/IFAS	University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WTO	World Trade Organization