

2024 Priorities

Food Security	Health Care	Competition	Water and Land Use	Climate Resiliency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to affordable, quality food is a basic human right - Promote resilient regional food systems and diverse markets - Raise the commodity loan rate to a level that reflects the cost of production, which will encourage a return to commodity reserves - Reinstate mandatory country-of-origin labeling for beef and pork - A label must accurately reflect the contents of the product being sold including country of origin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We believe health care is a fundamental right - Continue to support funding, such as Medicaid Expansion, which directly benefits rural hospitals - Support increased tele-health and telemedicine access - Incentivize providers to practice in rural areas, improving access to and quality of care - Increase access and funding for mental health, substance abuse, and addiction services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demand fair prices throughout the food system supply chain - Urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to follow through with anti-trust investigations - Encourage USDA to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act <p>Support including a competition title in the Farm Bill.</p> <p>Support agricultural Right to Repair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support water law with prior appropriations doctrine <p>Support retaining Montana groundwaters and surface waters for the use of Montanans in Montana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oppose the drilling of exempt wells that affect existing water users - Support a farmland and rangeland protection policy to encourage the continuation of farming vs urban development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recognize the importance of soil health - Promote developing crops, varieties, and animal breeds that perform under extreme circumstances - Partner with rural communities and utilities to increase their use of renewable energy - Encourage the expansion of biofuels <p>Support Risk Management Agency (RMA) to credit cover crops instead of penalizing their use.</p> <p>Support RMA programs to insure all crops grown in Montana.</p>

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**2022-2023
MONTANA FARMERS UNION
POLICY AND PROGRAM**

*(Bolded language is new language adopted at
Oct. 14-15, 2022 - MFU Annual Convention)*

1 PREAMBLE

2 - The needs and aspirations of farmers are those
3 of humanity at large. Montana Farmers Union
4 advocates a program that is beneficial for
5 farmers, laborers and consumers alike. We seek
6 a like opportunity in life for **all**, both within our
7 own country and in other lands. We emphasize
8 the preservation of rural community life and the
9 traditional independence of farmers living on
10 the family farm. A family farm or structured
11 family agricultural operation is run by a family,
12 assumes the economic risk and makes the
13 management decisions. (2014)

14
15 -Our aims can best be attained through
16 individual and cooperative action in our
17 democracy. We are convinced of the truth and
18 rightness of the Declaration of Independence
19 and the Constitution of the United States, its
20 Bill of Rights and other amendments.

21
22 **AGRICULTURAL POLICY**

23 - Keep farmers on the farm by leading a national
24 campaign to promote a price balance between
25 sales and cost of farm operations.

26
27 -Given the continuing loss of farmers and
28 decline in population of rural communities in
29 Montana, support and encourage continuation
30 of all USDA programs that assist in the
31 establishment of beginning farmers and
32 ranchers. Urges full and continued funding of
33 beginning or young farmer and rancher
34 programs. (2012)

35
36 **We urge lawmakers to provide legislation to**
37 **create programs and remedies for reducing**
38 **obstacles to beginning farmers. We support**
39 **mentorship and apprenticeship programs on**
40 **farms and ranches. (2023)**

41

42 -Montana Farmers Union is committed to all
43 possible unity among agricultural organizations,
44 small businesses, labor, religious and
45 conservation groups in the state of Montana.

46

47 -We oppose consolidation of farmland
48 ownership **commodity manufacturing,**
49 **processing and storage facilities** in the hands
50 of a few. Instead, we support a climate which
51 will permit family-based farms to flourish
52 including; availability of monetary support,
53 adequate credit opportunity, fair **international**
54 **trade** and equitable profitability for agricultural
55 producers.

56

57 -Advocate and urge funding for conservation
58 including soil, water, atmosphere and energy as
59 a responsible economic investment in the
60 future.

61

62 -Recognize that active participation in the
63 political process is necessary **at the local,** state,
64 national and international levels to achieve
65 equity for the agricultural industry.

66

67 -Support like-minded organizations in their
68 efforts to support the economic viability of
69 agricultural producers. (2013)

70

71 **AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM**

72 -Support a Farm Program that provides adequate
73 support to the producers and that support be
74 provided at the grassroots level.

75

76 -Support a farm program that emphasizes the
77 importance of food security to our nation. Refer
78 to the farm program as the "National Food
79 Security Program". (2006)

80

81 -Encourage farm policy that incentivizes
82 sustainable and regenerative agriculture to
83 combat issues facing the environment, soil
84 health, drought, flood, financial risk, food
85 security and rural quality of life. (2021)

86

87 -Encourage the use of RMA yield data in
88 determining payment eligibility for farm
89 programs. (2016)

90 -Producer safety nets should guarantee a
91 revenue level that assures producers the ability
92 to cover all costs of production. (2016)

93

1 -Call for strict enforcement of realistic payment
2 limitations. (2000)

3
4 -Urge full funding, staffing **and training** for
5 FSA and NRCS in county-based offices.
6 Oppose consolidation of county offices. (1999)

7
8 -Urge flexibility on conservation compliance
9 plans within FSA-NRCS programs and allow
10 local boards more authority.

11 **PARITY**

12 -Urge that the price of raw materials be raised to
13 historical parity levels at the marketplace.

14
15
16 -Urge the historic parity formula (1949) be
17 retained as the official measure of return to
18 agriculture and recommend that Congress set up
19 a program to fairly compensate the farmer on the
20 land. (1990)

21 **COMMODITY LOAN, RESERVE AND 22 PRODUCTION CONTROLS**

23 -A farm program should recognize the market
24 realities of the fundamentally unique business of
25 farming. Such a program should include these
26 basic provisions.

27
28
29 -Price and/or income support mechanisms for
30 agricultural commodities that establishes a floor
31 under market prices and enables producers to
32 obtain their income from the marketplace
33 (2022).

34
35 -Price supports should primarily be provided by
36 CCC nonrecourse, commodity loans.

37
38 -Flexible loan maturity periods should be able to
39 be extended at the discretion of the producer for
40 up to 18 months, with the producer able to
41 forfeit after 9 months.

42
43 - Income support, price support, and CCC loan
44 rates should be set at levels to ensure producers
45 receive a fair return on their investment. The
46 loan rate should not be for less than the USDA
47 national average cost of production. CCC loan
48 rates should be adjusted annually to reflect
49 inflation and productivity.

50 - Income support, price support, and CCC loan
51 rates should be annually balanced in an upward
52 manner, to prevent market and planting
53 distortions.

54
55 MFU strongly urges the establishment of a
56 voluntary, farmer-owned market-driven
57 inventory system that reduces volatility in
58 agricultural commodity markets. For such a
59 system to succeed, we recommend the
60 following:

61
62 -USDA will offer per bushel storage rates for
63 commodities when prices fall below a
64 designated loan rate, which is set near the
65 midpoint between the variable and full cost of
66 production for each commodity. Enrollment in
67 the storage program will cease when prices
68 recover.

69
70 -Farmers may enter any portion of their crop
71 into storage, which must remain enrolled in the
72 program until the market price for the
73 commodity reaches the release price, or
74 approximately 130 percent of the loan rate.

75
76 -Economically sound inventory caps should be
77 set on each commodity. Should the inventory
78 cap be reached for a commodity, a voluntary set-
79 aside program may be made available by
80 USDA.

81
82 -When the release price is reached, the farmer
83 may sell the commodity into the market or hold
84 the commodity, but storage rates will cease.

85 -Allowing the Secretary of Agriculture the
86 authority to manage price-depressing surpluses
87 by providing producers incentives to plant
88 dedicated energy crops on acres which are now,
89 or may be produced, in surplus.

90
91 -Commodity support based on actual production
92 history (APH), where available. For cases
93 without APH, the program yield cannot be lower
94 than county Farm Service Agency yields.
95 Additionally, we urge the establishment of APH

1 floors to protect producers in the event of
2 successive crop failure brought on by natural
3 disasters.

4
5 -Low-interest commodity storage facility loans
6 should be made available to producers.

7
8 -Each farm operator and crop share landlord
9 should be eligible for maximum loan volume
10 targeted to family farms.

11
12 -Farmers should have the right to periodically
13 update acreage bases and proven yields on all
14 crops for each farm.

15
16 -Farmers should have the option to store
17 forfeited commodity and receive storage
18 payments until final sale is consummated.

19
20 -Marketing Assistance loans and programs like
21 the Loan Deficiency Program should be
22 eliminated because they undermine the benefits
23 of the commodity loan programs. (2020)

24
25 **CROPS AND SEED**

26 - Support the right of producers to save seed
27 for their own production. (2013)

28
29 -Urge development of a seed bank program to
30 preserve genetic diversity and **cultural**
31 **significance** of crops. (2007)

32
33 **We support enhancing and diversifying the**
34 **genome and plant genetic resource pools,**
35 **recognizing farmers' contributions to the**
36 **development and conservation of plant**
37 **genetic resources by protecting farmers'**
38 **rights, of patented plants and plant genetic**
39 **resources, the rights of farmers and**
40 **breeders to save seeds from all plant**
41 **varieties and cultivars developed with public**
42 **funds and establishing and maintaining**
43 **foundation seed banks. (2023)**

44
45 **We oppose the consolidation of seed**
46 **companies, and ownership of plant genetics.**
47 **(2023)**

48
49 -Streamline the importation of seed for domestic
50 production. (2014)

51 - **Support both seed exchanges and seed**
52 **libraries for the open exchange of heirloom**
53 **and open-pollinated seeds. (2023)**

54
55 -Increase transparency with producer
56 participation in the varietal release processes.
57 (2019)

58
59 **SPECIALTY CROPS**

60 **MFU recognizes the wide range and diversity**
61 **of agricultural and horticultural products**
62 **grown by Montana farmers and ranchers**
63 **and support research, development and**
64 **marketing of new and non-traditional crops**
65 **and innovative uses of the more commonly**
66 **grown crops and their by-products at**
67 **regional, state and federal levels. (2023)**

68
69 -We support the Specialty Crop Block Grant
70 Program (SCB), and encourage continued
71 research, development and marketing of new
72 and existing specialty crops in Montana. (2018)

73
74 -Support development of Montana vineyard
75 production and marketing through Montana
76 wineries. (2022)

77
78 **HEMP**

79 -Support laws to allow production of Hemp,
80 including, but not limited to:

- 81 • Ensuring the availability of quality seed
- 82 • Assuring that hemp growers will have
83 unmitigated access to the banking
84 system and FDIC and local banks update
85 their policies to current hemp laws
- 86 • Allowing producers to sell and ship seed
87 across state lines
- 88 • Assuring that hemp growers will have
89 unmitigated access to the banking
90 system
- 91 • Create a crop insurance program that
92 covers producers in a manner similar to
93 other commodities (2019)
- 94 • Encourage MSU and other research
95 institutions to begin field trials of hemp
96 in a variety of climates around the state
97 and region

- 1 • Lobby for hemp to be regulated as a
2 food, feed, and fiber product by the FDA
3 and/or USDA
- 4 • A label should accurately reflect the
5 contents of the product (2020)

7 **WOOL**

8 -Urge reinstatement of the Wool and Mohair
9 Act of 1954.

11 **LIVESTOCK**

12 -We support teaching animal welfare, as
13 opposed to animal rights, through educational
14 programs and agricultural organizations. We
15 support domestic animals' access to proper
16 food, shelter and water for survival. (2014)

18 -Support a fully funded vaccine bank. (2018)

19 -The United States does not have a widespread
20 occurrence of Bovine Spongiform
21 Encephalopathy. Therefore, we support no
22 additional regulation regarding BSE. With the
23 current ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban in place,
24 adequate firewalls are in place to assure that the
25 United States beef supply is safe. (2005)

27 -Yellowstone Bison shall not be relocated to any
28 other area of Montana without a complete
29 environmental impact assessment. (2011)

31 -Opposes the expansion of the DSA (Designated
32 Surveillance Area) in the absence of brucellosis
33 confirmed in domestic livestock. (2016)

35 -We support compensation for livestock
36 producers for testing of herds that have been
37 state or federally quarantined for disease. (2021)

39 -Request equitable import and export policies,
40 inspection standards and recourse to emergency
41 assistance. (1990)

43 -Urge any foreign meats or other food stuffs
44 entering the United States be subject to the same
45 standards, which applies to United States meats
46 and other food stuffs.

48 -We oppose the importation of animals and food
49 stuffs from countries with active Foot and
50 Mouth Disease. (2015)

52 -Support the ban of meat and/or meat products
53 from the foreign countries that allow use of
54 medications or additives not approved for use in
55 the U.S. (2010)

57 **-Raise the beef check-off rate from \$1 to \$2
58 or start a second checkoff program under the
59 Commodity Promotion Research and
60 Information Act of 1996, when the following
61 changes are made to the beef check off:
62 (2023)**

- 63 • Check-off dollars be used to promote
64 only livestock born, raised and
65 processed in the United States. (2013)
- 66 • Allow Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) to
67 contract directly with any entity,
68 including any national non-profit cattle
69 organizations, businesses, university
70 researchers, advertising and marketing
71 agencies and other consultants. (2008)
- 72 • Reform the national Beef Board to
73 reflect proportional representation from
74 all national agriculture organizations.
75 (2005)
- 76 • Allow for check off expenditures to
77 protect USA beef and cattle from unfair
78 trade practices and to protect the U.S.
79 herd from import practices, which
80 threaten cattle herd health and beef
81 consumers. (2005)
- 82 • Allow for check off expenditures to
83 promote branded products from small
84 and large packing entities. (2005)
- 85 • Require all packers to pay into the check
86 off program when purchasing cattle.
87 (2005)
- 88 • Provide that 70% of all funds collected
89 remain in the state where collected and
90 30% to the National Beef Board. (2005)

1 -Support mandatory price and volume reporting
2 of livestock, including “captive supply” by all
3 major packers. (2021)

4
5 -Recognize the serious threat of West Nile
6 disease and urge local governments to control
7 mosquitoes. We recommend education to the
8 public for protection of humans and livestock
9 (2003) against the disease.

10
11 -MFU urges the following: (2013)

- 12 • Exclude feeder cattle from the rules and
13 include funding for state record
14 keeping. (2011)
- 15 • We urge the Department of Homeland
16 Security to provide the full funding
17 necessary to create and maintain the
18 database and provide compensation to
19 producers for their program
20 implementation costs. (2005)
- 21 • Mitigate producer liability for
22 contaminated food products. (2005)
- 23 • Any National Animal Identification
24 System (NAIS) should address herd
25 health only. This system should not
26 impose any additional costs to the
27 producer. (2020)
- 28 • Use of the proprietary information
29 should include clear limits to ensure the
30 information is not used by packers to
31 discount producer prices; be subjected
32 to a Freedom of Information Act
33 request, or passed to telemarketers, etc.
34 (2005)
- 35 • Control of the confidential database
36 needs to remain under the control of the
37 federal government. (2005)
- 38 • Access to producer information should
39 be provided for animal disease and bio
40 terrorism trace-back only. (2005)
- 41 • Ensure uniformity of identification
42 system with tracking technology and
43 database management. (2005)

44

45 -We support USDA inspected horse slaughter
46 facilities in the United States and encourage a
47 facility be built in Montana. (2013)

48
49 -Support the judicious use of antibiotics. (2015)

50
51 -Provide funding to support the Montana
52 livestock diagnostic laboratory in its entirety.
53 (2017)

54
55 -We support Montana Department of Livestock
56 adoption of the 1000 Bird Exemption. (2014)

57 **DAIRY**

58
59 -Supports a national policy establishing an
60 equitable floor price policy that sets a level that
61 allows producers to earn a fair return on their
62 **dairy products** from the marketplace. (2010)

63
64 -We urge the passage of a Raw Milk Law that
65 allows the sale and consumption of raw milk in
66 Montana under regulation and licensing that
67 insures the milk is produced under inspection
68 and is a safe food product. (2013)

69 -Establish a national mandatory program for
70 managed growth based on market demand and
71 price stability. Such a program should increase
72 farmer profitability by elevating milk prices,
73 preventing overproduction and reducing milk
74 price volatility. (2022)

75 **POLLINATORS**

76
77 -Continue and expand research and education
78 aimed at protecting honeybee health as well as
79 development and enhancement of native
80 pollinator population.

81
82 -Support USDA programs that provide financial
83 support to producers willing to plant pollinator-
84 friendly habitat. (2020)

85
86 -Continue collaboration of the chemical
87 industry and pollinator industry, to provide
88 education to growers, applicators, and the
89 public, on the harmful effects of pesticides and
90 neonicotinoids on pollinator populations,
91 especially related to colony collapse disorder.

92

1 -Continue monitoring of pest populations, pest
2 control methods, as well as pollinator imports
3 and accidental importation of pests and invasive
4 species. (2014)

5

6 **MARKETING**

7 -Prohibit any one ag commodity organization
8 from serving as the “prime contractor” for a
9 publicly funded program but allow all
10 organizations to participate in approved projects
11 on a case-by-case basis. (2005)

12

13 -Encourage the creation of new check-off
14 programs for emerging commodities. (2014)

15

16 -Support check-off funds returning to state of
17 production and oppose double assessments.
18 (2015)

19

20 -Support a periodic vote on all check-off
21 programs (every five years) by a petition of 10%
22 of producers signing the petition at county FSA
23 offices. (2005 and 2006)

24

25 -Urge MFU and NFU to continue to use the
26 Internet to build a network between family
27 farmers and consumers to enhance direct
28 marketing and exchange vital information on
29 products, nutrition, safety and environmental
30 concerns. (1999)

31

32 -Support the concept of working together
33 through a marketing system, which is
34 cooperative in nature, fair in application and
35 open to farmer input in operation. (1990)

36

37 -Encourage the state of Montana to maintain
38 Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS). (2014)

39

40 -Call for development and implementation of
41 national legislation prohibiting unreasonable
42 conduct, such as unjustifiable price
43 discrimination, by a business that is in a
44 dominating position in contracting, supplying or
45 buying agricultural goods or services. (1999)

46

47 -We support state attorney general’s filing suit
48 to enforce current federal anti-trust laws
49 including the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the
50 Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921. The
51 Federal Trade Commission, Senate Judiciary
52 Committee and the Department of Justice
53 should enforce current regulations. If large
54 concentrations of power still remain, necessary
55 legislation should be enacted to regulate those
56 corporations just as we do other monopolistic
57 entities. (2018)

58

59 -Support USDA’s rulemaking on Packers and
60 Stockyards Act adding provisions to make it
61 easier for farmers to legally challenge unfair
62 practices without a fear of being retaliated
63 against and address market practices that are
64 unfair, discriminatory, or deceptive to farmers
65 and ranchers. Such implementation creates jobs
66 in rural America, assures competitive markets
67 and prevents meatpackers from manipulating
68 the market driving prices lower for farmers.
69 (2012&2021)

70

71 -Support adequate funding for the state’s
72 Growth through Agriculture (GTA) program.
73 (2016)

74

75 -Support the continued use and adequate
76 funding for the Montana State Grain Lab **and**
77 **the Montana State Wool Lab** (2020).

78

79 -Support adequate funding for research and
80 inspections of agricultural exports and therefore
81 issuance of export certificates. (2013)

82 -Oppose trade deals that unevenly regulate
83 imports and exports between the US and other
84 nations. (2015)

85

86 -Work toward expanding the opportunities in
87 both the number of crops exported and the value
88 returned to our member producers from trade
89 with Cuba and other potential trade countries.
90 (2003)

91

92 -Support continuation of the State Meat
93 Inspection Program. (1993)

94

1 -Regulatory change is required, to allow state-
2 inspected meat to be sold across state lines.
3 There must be a commitment to funding more
4 inspectors to aid in the development of more
5 local processing. (2022)

6
7 -A label must accurately reflect the contents of
8 the product being sold. To maintain their
9 integrity all USDA certifications must clearly
10 identify product origin and whether inspection
11 or auditing was done by a third party. (2021)

12
13 -Urge Country of Origin labeling of all
14 agricultural commodities and processed food
15 products sold in the U.S. (2000)

16
17 -We declare that all producers receive full
18 indemnity from the agricultural activities
19 occurring on lands not under their ownership or
20 management that they be held harmless from the
21 intrusion of GMO and GE crops upon their lands
22 and the associated costs and burdens of said
23 intrusion; and that they receive full immunity
24 against litigation in cases of GMO and GE drift
25 contamination into their lands. (2013)

26
27 -Premiums should be paid for wheat weighing
28 above 60 pounds per bushel, just as wheat is
29 discounted below 60 pounds per bushel. (2003)

30
31 -Support wheat pricing of protein based on
32 tenths of percent rather than quarters.

33
34 -Urge congressional investigation of
35 commodity futures trading, especially index
36 funds, to determine any adverse effects the trade
37 might have on farm commodity prices.

38
39 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

40 -Support Risk Management Programs such as
41 the State Hail and Federal Crop Insurance
42 Compensation Programs as a part of a viable
43 farm program.

44
45 -Increase bond percent up to 4% per location per
46 company and support option of fines by
47 Department of Agriculture to ensure producers

48 adequate compensation should a commodity
49 dealer fail before paying producer. (2013)

50
51 -Support changes to RMA to encourage more
52 diverse and effective cropping systems. (2019)

53
54 -Support RMA to credit cover crops instead of
55 penalizing their uses. (2022)

56
57 -Support RMA programs to insure all crops
58 grown in the state. (2022)

59
60 -Support crop insurance incentives for soil
61 health improvements and climate-friendly
62 conservation activities. (2022)

63
64 **Support a cap on the amount of subsidy an
65 individual can receive for federal crop
66 insurance. (2023)**

67
68 **CONSERVATION**

69 -Support keeping EQIP and CSP as separate
70 programs. (2018)

71
72 **Support the expansion of the Montana State
73 Nursery to meet the demands of
74 conservation programs. (2023)**

75
76 -Support expansion of the Conservation
77 Stewardship Program to allow more producers
78 the opportunity to enroll. (2016)

79
80 -Support broad-based agricultural conservation
81 practice and development programs in the State
82 of Montana.

83
84 -Protect agricultural lands through conservation
85 easements or similar contract arrangements to
86 preserve open land. (2007)

87
88 -Encourage sufficient funding through
89 appropriation and cost share programs. (2016)

90
91 -Develop conservation dams that incorporate
92 flood control and domestic, municipal,
93 agricultural, and recreational uses.

1 -Provide adequate off-stream storage to reserve
2 water for agricultural uses. (1990)

3
4 -Require **effective** management of existing
5 dams to prevent flooding of agricultural land.
6 (2022)

7
8 -Require **effective management of existing**
9 **dams to provide adequate water for**
10 **irrigation and fisheries. (2023)**

11
12 -Support adequate funding for coordination of
13 statewide weed control and nursery inspections
14 while ensuring on-going weed control on state
15 and federal lands, county roadways, railroad
16 rights-of-way and state and private lands. (2014)

17
18 -Support control of invasive species to preserve
19 Montana natural resources. (2010)

20
21 -To keep rural communities, farms and ranches
22 viable, we encourage new CRP programs with a
23 25 percent maximum acreage enrollment per
24 farm rather than 25 percent of a county's
25 farmland. (2003)

26
27 -Allow CRP lands to be withdrawn early from
28 their contracts in order to be put into
29 production for bio-crops. There would be no
30 penalties for early withdrawal as long as the
31 land was kept in bio-crop production for the
32 term of the original CRP contract. (2006)

33 -Encourage the retention and increased funding
34 of the Transition Incentive Program (TIP).
35 (2011)

36 37 **RESEARCH**

38 -The Montana legislature shall be mandated to
39 provide adequate funding for personnel,
40 facilities and equipment at the Agricultural
41 Research Stations and the Cooperative
42 Extension Service. (2010)

43
44 -Support an increase in the Wheat & Barley
45 Committee Check-off Program to provide
46 funding for research with an emphasis on
47 Agriculture Research Stations. (2010)

48
49 -Oppose corporate donor generated funds for Ag
50 research, facilities, and capital equipment
51 without adequate care to preserve the integrity

52 of research and accountability to the taxpayer of
53 the land grant university system. (2004)

54
55 -Oppose the use of public resources for
56 development of proprietary products. MFU
57 supports increased funding for public research
58 at land grant universities. (2013)

59
60 -Support publicly funded research to develop
61 improved crop varieties, **including both**
62 **conventional, and organic** as well as new uses,
63 industrial and otherwise, which will create new
64 markets for agricultural products (2021).

65
66 -Support development of effective, low-cost
67 alternative inputs and research into
68 opportunities to capture an economic return by
69 switching to inputs derived from crop by-
70 products. (2021)

71
72 -Support research that will provide a better
73 understanding of what we produce and its effect
74 on human health, as well as support targeting
75 improved production, management, and
76 marketing characteristics. (2012)

77
78 -Urge expansion of Agricultural Experiment
79 Station's development of fertilizing methods,
80 livestock breeding, farming techniques (organic
81 and biological) and new equipment that will
82 help preserve a farmer's competitive position.

83
84 -Encourage the Montana Agricultural
85 Experiment Stations to continue research that is
86 economically feasible **and sustainable** for
87 family farms and ranches.

88
89 -Encourage research stations to deliver practical
90 information to farmers and ranchers to assist in
91 adopting practices to mitigate climate change
92 (2022).

93
94 -Favor the establishment of an acreage
95 dedicated to a long-term organic cropping
96 system at each of the state experiment stations,
97 for the purpose of conducting research in areas
98 such as crop rotations and yield trials, soil
99 nutrition, weed and pest management and, plant
100 disease, etc. (2004)

1
2 -Support public funding allocations for organic
3 production systems that are commensurate with
4 organic’s contribution to the overall
5 agricultural economy. (2021)

6
7 -Urge that Agricultural Experiment Stations
8 make effective use of farmer advisory
9 committees.

10
11 **PESTICIDE REGULATIONS AND**
12 **PESTICIDE APPLICATORS**

13 -Require safe and proper handling, marketing
14 and disposal of chemicals to ensure the safety of
15 people and the environment.

16
17 -Request adequate state and federal funding for
18 the Department of Agriculture and MSU
19 Extension to perform its duties in licensing
20 applicators, and monitoring of pesticides.

21
22 -Recognize the use of pesticides as a valuable
23 tool in conventional ag. (2019)

24
25 -Support requiring adequate insurance coverage
26 for commercial applicators. (2019)

27
28 **We support regulations that include**
29 **protections for producers of non-target**
30 **crops that incur damage due to drift from**
31 **any crop applications onto their property.**
32 **(2023)**

33
34 **We support funding additional avenues for**
35 **applicators to implement the use of smart or**
36 **precision spraying systems to reduce**
37 **pesticide use, drift and resistance. (2023)**

38
39
40 **TRANSPORTATION AND RAILROADS**

41 -Encourage establishing a coordinated national
42 system of water, rail and air transportation that
43 will serve both rural and urban areas at
44 reasonable rates.

45
46 -Urge reinstatement of the Rail Service
47 Competition Council. (2020)

48

49 -Support strong farmer and rancher
50 representation on the State Department of
51 Transportation. (1992)

52 -Farm equipment operators should be exempt
53 from Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)
54 requirements. (2011)

55 -Support an electronic log device waiver for
56 livestock haulers. (2017)

57
58 -Support extended hours of service exemption
59 for agricultural commodities. (2019)

60
61 -Urge special emphasis in addressing the
62 crumbling infrastructure in the immediate
63 future. Getting crops to market requires special
64 handling, speed and affordability and if not
65 addressed quickly is not only a safety issue but
66 a national security problem. (2012)

67
68 -Oppose indiscriminate freight rate increases.

69
70 -Support the continuing viability of the less-
71 than-shuttle facility system of elevators in
72 Montana which enhances diversity of rail
73 movements by Montana farmers’ production.
74 We oppose any actions by railroads that will not
75 encourage the long-term viability of the less-
76 than-shuttle facilities in Montana. (2013)

77
78 -Ask the Montana State Attorney General and
79 the United States Anti-Trust Department to
80 vigorously investigate and enforce laws to
81 prevent price fixing of retail motor fuels. We ask
82 that both state and federal funding be
83 appropriated to enforce anti-trust and predatory
84 pricing laws. (1999)

85 -Oppose further deregulation of railroads.

86
87 **Oppose railroad development which would**
88 **interfere with or disrupt agricultural**
89 **production. (2023)**

90
91 **Support efforts for permanent access or**
92 **rights-of-way for ranch and farmlands or**
93 **infrastructure impacted by public**
94 **transportation corridors. (2023)**

95

- 1 -Work to get rail rates reduced so that they are
- 2 comparable to other states and to encourage rail
- 3 competition. (2005)
- 4 -Support a statewide impact analysis of
- 5 increased rail traffic with jurisdictional
- 6 oversight by the Surface Transportation Board.
- 7 (2015)
- 8
- 9 -Support a Southern Montana passenger rail
- 10 service from Missoula to Billings. (2020)
- 11
- 12 -Support a shipping weight variance for
- 13 livestock transported within Montana. (2018)
- 14

15 **COOPERATIVE POLICY**

- 16 -Cooperation is a guidepost of the Farmers
- 17 Union, sharing the organization's triangle with
- 18 education and legislation.
- 19
- 20 -Support patron-owned, democratically
- 21 controlled cooperatives, built on the principle of
- 22 one person, one vote, with distribution of
- 23 savings in direct proportion to patronage.
- 24
- 25 -Cooperative endeavor is a legitimate and
- 26 logical extension enabling farmers to take their
- 27 operations into the marketplace and allowing
- 28 individual producers to realize the benefits
- 29 generated by their production through the sale,
- 30 processing, and ultimate purchase by the
- 31 consumer.
- 32
- 33 -Because cooperatives are our business, it is
- 34 imperative that Farmers Union members
- 35 actively support and participate in their local
- 36 and regional cooperatives.
- 37
- 38 -Urge Agricultural co-ops and businesses to
- 39 have a majority of their board members made up
- 40 of agricultural producers (2018).
- 41
- 42 -Support efforts and services keyed to
- 43 cooperative principles which are provided by
- 44 CHS, Farmers Union Insurance, Rural Electric
- 45 Cooperatives, Rural Telephone Associations,
- 46 Farm Credit Services, Credit Unions, Bank for
- 47 Cooperatives, Council of Cooperatives,
- 48 Montana Cooperative Development Center,
- 49 Lake County Cooperative Development Center,

- 50 irrigation districts, grazing districts and other
- 51 cooperatives in the state.
- 52
- 53 -Educate the general public as to the important
- 54 role of cooperatives in economic systems.
- 55
- 56 -Establish and continue a positive and
- 57 aggressive approach to cooperative education,
- 58 and philosophy for Farmers Union members.
- 59
- 60 -Emphasize the need to select cooperative
- 61 directors who understand and are loyal to the
- 62 ideas of cooperative business principles.
- 63
- 64 -Be ready to work with cooperatives, both local
- 65 and regional, in educating employees, directors
- 66 and patrons in cooperative philosophy.
- 67
- 68 -Stand ready to assume or contribute leadership
- 69 in the development of cooperatives in new
- 70 fields, emerging technologies, and
- 71 underdeveloped industries.
- 72

73 **-Maintain an active Young Producers**

74 **program and Associate Director program**

- 75 composed of beginning farmers and ranchers to
- 76 suggest ways to involve new and young people
- 77 in cooperatives. (2012)
- 78
- 79 -Urge all supply cooperatives to market locally
- 80 produced biofuels and lubricants, **using locally**
- 81 **sourced feedstocks.** (1990 & 2021)
- 82
- 83 -Initiate cooperative camps, conferences, and
- 84 seminars with other cooperative enterprises.
- 85
- 86 **-We encourage all cooperatives to contribute**
- 87 **education funds to MFU for further**
- 88 **cooperative education. (2023)**
- 89
- 90 -Businesses and associations may not use the
- 91 word cooperative or its abbreviations in the
- 92 promotion of their business unless organized
- 93 legally as a cooperative. (2022)
- 94

95 **PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY**

- 96 -Education is the cornerstone of our democracy.
- 97 It has long been regarded as a national ethic,
- 98 preceding the establishment of our country as an
- 99 independent nation.
- 100
- 101 -Support full funding for Public Schools. (2020)

1
2 **- Reject diverting public funding from public**
3 **schools to any charter schools. (2023)**
4
5 -Support equitable, quality, inclusive education
6 for all levels because this benefits not only
7 individuals, but our state as well. An educated
8 citizenry is a social protection and an
9 unparalleled economic advantage. We regard
10 education as a public utility, not a fringe benefit.
11
12 -Promote education in cooperative philosophy
13 and practical cooperative business operations in
14 our public schools both locally and with the
15 Office of Public Instruction and our state
16 university system.
17
18 -Support the Agriculture in Montana Schools
19 program.
20
21 -Support a Farm to School program that
22 highlights **the core elements of procurement**
23 **of and education about Montana**
24 **Agricultural products, and school gardens.**
25 **(2010 & 2021)**
26
27 **Urge elected leaders to prioritize equity in**
28 **access, quality and funding** of educational
29 opportunity for rural areas **at both state and**
30 **national levels.**
31
32 -Urge adequate funding for vocational-technical
33 education.
34
35 -Commend and support post-secondary efforts
36 such as WWAMI (a consortium made up of the
37 states of Wyoming, Washington, Alaska,
38 Montana and Idaho) and WICHE (Western
39 Interstate Commission for Higher Education),
40 both of which offer educational opportunities,
41 particularly in professional programs, not
42 available in Montana.
43
44
45 -Reinforce methods to make school personnel
46 aware of quality educational and resource
47 materials on cooperative businesses and
48 philosophy. (1990)
49
50 -Compile and keep current a list of local and
51 regional scholarships available at Montana's

52 schools and colleges for students in agriculture.
53 (1990)
54
55 -Recognizing the value of Ag Education and
56 specifically the FFA and 4-H programs, we urge
57 the state legislature to provide the support
58 necessary to strengthen and continue these
59 programs.
60 -Urge continued support for the 6-mill levy,
61 supporting the University system of Montana.
62
63 **FARM AGRICULTURAL CREDIT**
64 -Urge strenuous support and adequate funding
65 for the Farm Credit Service incorporating long-
66 range, low interest, cooperative policies as the
67 structure was originally designed. (1990)
68
69 -Call for continued protection of borrower
70 stock.
71
72 -Urge a guarantee of borrower's rights a method
73 of restructuring of borrower debts and the right
74 of first refusal.
75
76 -Support a secondary market for agricultural
77 loans including real estate.
78
79 -Support an effort to meet beginning farmer's
80 credit needs and those whose credit needs
81 cannot be met by commercial lenders.
82
83 -Urge utilization of applicable Farm Credit
84 guidelines in Rural Economic Community
85 Development (RECD) programs.
86
87 **ENERGY**
88 -Oppose the privatization of the Federal Power
89 Administration and the government-owned
90 transmission and power generation facilities at
91 federal dams.
92
93 -Support **state and** federal programs to reduce
94 our dependence on **fossil fuels** through the
95 development of alternative sources such as
96 biofuels, geothermal, solar and wind energy
97 technologies among others to provide
98 affordable energy. (2021)
99
100 **Support a phased transition from fossil fuel**
101 **extraction and use to developing other**

1 **energy sources that fairly compensates**
2 **impacted farms, ranches, and communities.**
3 **(2023)**

4 -Urge the use of biofuels as sources for
5 strategic, transportation and heating fuels.
6 (2005 & 2010 & 2021)

7 -Promote the establishment and construction of
8 **domestic biofuel plants and associated**
9 **processing facilities (2021 & 2022).**

10

11 -Support the retention of RFS, and oppose the
12 changing of the statute, without information
13 based on the best possible science, and approval
14 by public review.

15

16 **Encourage the EPA to add additional**
17 **feedstocks for renewable diesel and jet fuel,**
18 **and research other oilseeds as biofuel**
19 **feedstock. (2023)**

20

21 -Encourage education on issues involved with
22 renewable energy, including right of way,
23 leasing and property rights with takings
24 affecting landowners. (2009)

25

26 -Safety precautions and landowner protections
27 need to be a high priority in impact statement
28 reviews for pipeline development to ensure
29 protection of Montana farms, ranches, land, air
30 and water from adverse impacts. (2012&2021)

31

32 -Support the requirement to purchase double
33 current state standards (15%) of renewable
34 energy credits and the electricity output from
35 community renewable energy projects. (2010)

36

37 -Support legislation and initiatives to obtain
38 25% of energy from renewable resources by
39 2025. (2016)

40

41 -The increase in generating capacity created by
42 new hydro-electric generation projects in
43 existing facilities that come on-line should be
44 classified as renewable energy. (2012)

45

46 -Require new non-utility merchant
47 transmission lines and pipelines set aside 3%
48 annual gross revenues to be paid annually to
49 landowners upon whom the transmission lines
50 and pipelines are built in place of the current
51 practice of one-time easement payments.
52 (2009)

53 -We encourage electric co-ops throughout the
54 nation, to build and acquire the generating and
55 transmission resources necessary to ensure the
56 same balance of cost-based power. (2003)

57

58 **Support the establishment of publicly-owned**
59 **energy utilities. (2023)**

60

61 **NET METERING**

62 -Montana Farmers Union calls upon the
63 Montana Legislature to enact legislation to
64 expand the benefits of net metering by raising
65 the current cap of 50KW, allow multiple meters
66 for effective use of wind/solar systems on
67 farmsteads and for community net metering and
68 finally to let renewable energy generators to
69 bank excess energy as credit beyond 12 months
70 for future credit. (2014)

71

72 **AGRITOURISM**

73 -Support the expansion of **both income-**
74 **generating and educational agritourism**
75 **opportunities for Montana producers and**
76 **their products. (2017)**

77

78 **Support a state program providing reliable**
79 **information about liability and safety issues**
80 **surrounding agritourism. (2023)**

81

82

83 **LAND USE**

84 **We believe agriculture is the highest and**
85 **best use of arable lands for society as a**
86 **whole, yet such lands are increasingly being**
87 **lost to urban sprawl or development for**
88 **other uses. Therefore, we urge local, state**
89 **and federal governments to take**
90 **appropriate actions to protect suitable**

1 **farmlands from development for non-**
2 **agricultural uses. (2023)**

3 -Request that trespassers be held liable for any
4 damage done to private property along public
5 access streams.

6 -Support public and private partnerships that
7 address the loss of access by Montana citizens
8 to federal and state lands. (2020)

9
10 -We discourage new mineral extraction until
11 EIS's are completed. We encourage the
12 Montana legislature to fund the DEQ
13 sufficiently to comply with current law. (2014)

14
15 -Support state-of-the-art reclamation of all lands
16 involved in extractive industries.

17
18 -Urge the State of Montana and all other
19 governmental agencies to adopt measures,
20 which require the least possible interference
21 with agricultural production during extraction of
22 minerals.

23
24 -Reclamation, including weed control, should
25 be the responsibility of the land developer.
26 (2021)

27
28 -The land developer must have a noxious weed
29 control plan approved by the local weed board.
30 (2021)

31 -Areas of land in Montana that are identified as
32 Wilderness Study Areas should have a date of
33 completion. (2014)

34
35 -Oppose any agency or individual entering into
36 a mineral lease or granting a permit for the
37 extraction of minerals without the consent of the
38 land surface owner, with just compensation to
39 the agricultural operation.

40
41 -Support the ban on cyanide heap leach in
42 mining. (2011)

43
44 -Urge a more transparent and thorough
45 permitting process for Class II Oil and Gas Solid

46 Waste Disposal Sites that will include a
47 mandatory Environmental Impact Study (EIS).
48 Support the strengthening of Montana's Class II
49 Solid Waste Disposal Sites laws to match or
50 exceed North Dakota statutes to protect
51 Montanan's land and resources. (2013)

52 -Mineral estate has dominance over surface
53 owners by law. Surface owners should be
54 compensated for damages to property.
55 Compensation should be paid for well sites,
56 easements and other facilities that are brought in
57 and used by the industry. (2005)

58
59 -Support safety precautions and landowner
60 protection in impact statement reviews for oil
61 and gas wells to ensure protection of Montana
62 farms, ranches, land, air and water from adverse
63 impacts. (2013)

64
65 -Oppose any transfer of public land to private
66 entities which would adversely impact
67 agriculture. (2015)

68
69 -Support a farmland protection policy to
70 encourage the continuation of farming vs urban
71 development. (2022)

72
73 **We call for conflicts between land uses and**
74 **the need for environmental protections to be**
75 **resolved through some combination of**
76 **cooperative use agreements, technical**
77 **and/or financial assistance and collaborative**
78 **long-range planning. (2023)**

79
80 **We support voluntary government programs**
81 **and initiatives proposal that offer financial**
82 **incentives to private landowners for keeping**
83 **farm and ranch lands intact while not**
84 **limiting or restricting agricultural practices**
85 **or livestock management or requiring that**
86 **private property be open to public access.**
87 **(2023)**

88
89
90 **ENVIRONMENT**

1 **Support continued disclosure of potential**
2 **impacts and public participation under the**
3 **Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)**
4 **regarding impacts to agriculture lands and**
5 **producers from proposals that may cause**
6 **harm to agricultural operations. (2023)**

7
8 -Support feasible air, water, and land use
9 standards to prevent degradation of our
10 environment and quality of life for present and
11 future generations.

12
13 **Support measures to mitigate impacts from**
14 **extreme weather or disaster events. (2023)**

15
16 -Support establishing numeric standards
17 regarding coal bed methane production to
18 protect our water, soils, and crops. (2022)

19
20 -When clean water standards for drinking
21 cannot be achieved then water should be treated
22 to standards acceptable for irrigation use. (2022)

23
24 -Large corporate concentrated animal feeding
25 operations (CAFO) must be required to operate
26 in a manner least damaging to the environment.
27 (2022)

28
29 -Support an adequate review, prior to the start of
30 each coal bed methane development, to identify
31 and propose mitigation measures to ensure that
32 the proposal will not:

- 33 1) Cause qualitative or quantitative problems
34 to off-site water resources
35 2) Alter vegetative characteristics
36 3) Cause subsidence; or
37 4) Negatively affect the land in other ways.
38 (2000)

39
40 -Require any company that wants to conduct
41 hydraulic fracturing in Montana to publicly
42 disclose all chemicals to be used. (2011)

43
44 -Support legislation that requires coal bed
45 methane producers to recharge aquifers with the
46 maximum amount of water practicable. (2010)

47

48 -Support classification of coal bed methane
49 water as ground water and ensuring senior water
50 rights holders, not developing companies, will
51 hold these water rights. (2009)

52
53 -Continue climate change monitoring and
54 research to provide agricultural producers with
55 the knowledge and ability to adapt to climate
56 change, and to reduce their environmental
57 impact. (2014)

58
59 -Any climate solution should address fair and
60 equitable compensation for all agricultural
61 producers to sequester carbon and reduce
62 greenhouse gases as well as development of
63 alternative energy resources. (2022)

64
65 -Ensure integrity of private carbon markets and
66 other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas
67 emissions and make sure that agriculture plays a
68 key role in these initiatives. (2022)

69
70 -Support immediate development of safe
71 methods of disposal of nuclear waste in the state
72 of origin.

73
74 -Request that educational programs be
75 conducted and corrective measures taken to
76 control saline seep.

77
78 -Support first priority for water used in
79 domestic, municipal and agricultural
80 consumption.

81
82 -Urge feasible legislation and educational
83 programs, which will assist in protecting ground
84 water from pollution and depletion beyond
85 natural recharge.

86
87 -Support out-of-state garbage bans to give the
88 state time to properly regulate large-scale
89 landfills.

90
91 -Recommend that prior to oil and gas drilling on
92 any agricultural property, the company should
93 provide an independent well and surface testing
94 for water quality and quantity base line. (2012)

1
2 -Support the expansion of the pesticide
3 container recycling program through increased
4 drop-off locations and times. (2016)
5 -Oppose the disposal of hazardous waste by
6 mixing it with fertilizer, and other farm
7 products, which is unacceptable and a
8 dangerous practice that threatens the
9 environment and human health.

10
11 -MFU should be instrumental in bringing
12 together agriculture organizations,
13 environmental and industry groups to examine
14 the latest national fertilizer standards and their
15 relevance to Montana. (1999)

16
17 -Support statewide recycling. (2015)
18
19 -Support replacement of non-renewable
20 materials with renewable materials. (2015)
21
22 -Support a farmer educational program to assist
23 in developing renewable packaging, marketing,
24 and production. (2015)

25
26 **NATURAL RESOURCES**

27
28 -Seek expanded technical assistance for
29 landowners of small timber tracts.

30
31 -Call for state license and bonding of all log and
32 timber scalers.

33
34 -Urge that timber and log purchases and sales be
35 based on total cubic content.

36 -Recommend that control of National Forests
37 should remain with the United States
38 Department of Agriculture.

39
40 -Urge that State and Federal Forest Services
41 expand their small sales program to make timber
42 available and provide continual employment for
43 small independent operations.

44
45 -Urge that state and federal forest policies
46 include the recognition of the importance of
47 permitted grazing and biomass production.
48 Increased funding should be provided for
49 salvaging dead trees and fuels reduction. (2011
50 & 2014)

51

52 -Oppose “let it burn” policies. (2002)
53
54 -Support practical grazing practices on public
55 land that supports good stewardship.
56
57 -Vacant grazing allotments on public land
58 should be made immediately available to
59 **Montana** livestock producers affected by
60 drought or other natural disaster. (2020).

61
62 **WATER**

63
64 **-The use of water storage through**
65 **impoundment structures, conservation**
66 **measures, USDA Small Watershed Program,**
67 **and implementation of soil health principles**
68 **as primary means for water development.**
69 **(2023)**

70
71 -Support a broad water- development policy,
72 which insures multiple uses, recognizing the
73 primacy of the needs of agriculture.

74
75 -Support state's right to adjudicate all waters
76 within its borders.

77
78 -Support State Water Court adjudication of all
79 state water disputes, including all federal, state
80 and private permits and/or reservations.

81
82 **-Any time a water source used by**
83 **agricultural and rural communities is**
84 **contaminated, all remediation expenses**
85 **should be levied against the responsible**
86 **party, and work should be completed in an**
87 **expeditious manner. (2023)**

88
89 -Oppose the levying of any additional fees on
90 any water rights that the claimants have already
91 paid an assessment for water rights adjudication.
92 (2004)

93
94 -Include agricultural representatives on river
95 basin councils. (2017)

96
97 -Oppose the drilling of exempt wells that affect
98 existing water users. (2017)

99
100 -Oppose legislation, administrative rules, and
101 reservation processes that give control of our
102 waterways to the Department of Fish, Wildlife
103 and Parks, Corps of Engineers or the
104 Environmental Protection Agency.

105

1 -Oppose broadening the definition of what
2 waters are covered under the Clean Water Act
3 that may unduly burden family farmers and
4 ranchers. (2021)
5
6 -Oppose the broadening of the federal
7 government's jurisdiction over a group of
8 waters simply because the bodies of water are
9 near each other. (2021)
10
11 -Oppose legislation, which allows federal
12 reservation of wilderness water rights.
13
14 -Oppose removal of dams on the Snake and
15 Columbia River systems. (1999)
16
17 -Oppose amendments to the Clean Water Act
18 that pertain to non-point source pollution, which
19 adversely affects family farms. (1992 & 2022)
20
21 -Recognize that a degradation of water occurs
22 through natural means and request that such
23 degradation be taken into consideration when
24 monitoring for non-point source pollution.
25
26 -Urge a water development program to include
27 the construction and rehabilitation of multiple
28 use water storage facilities and delivery
29 systems.
30
31 -Support the Montana Water Rights Compact
32 Commission, to continue and expedite the
33 adjudication of all federal water rights and all
34 water rights held in trust for the Indian tribes by
35 compact. Encourage public programs to provide
36 sufficient funding to bring this to a conclusion.
37
38 -Support a joint effort between the State of
39 Montana and federal lending agencies to supply
40 long-term low interest loans for agricultural
41 development of water that has been reserved for
42 agricultural purposes and irrigation and
43 encourage the agricultural interests to take
44 advantage of this and develop the water that has
45 been reserved, before losing it to downstream
46 states.
47
48 -We urge oil and gas companies to properly treat
49 and reuse their wastewater. (2013)

50

51 **WILDLIFE**

52 -Urge support of wildlife management to
53 maintain a brucellosis-free state.
54 -Bison and bison management throughout the
55 entire state of Montana, especially the Greater
56 Yellowstone Area, remains a concern to
57 Montana livestock producers. Effective bison
58 management is **an important component** of
59 the prevention of the spread of brucellosis and
60 to the protection of private property. Prevention
61 of brucellosis is in the interest of public health
62 and safety.
63
64 -Private property rights of all landowners must
65 be protected within any bison management plan.
66 Free roaming, feral and wild bison should not be
67 allowed within the state of Montana and all
68 bison should be regulated as livestock by the
69 Montana Department of Livestock. (2012)
70
71 -Support adjustments in Federal and State
72 grazing fees according to quality of grazing
73 units.
74
75 -The National Park Service shall eliminate
76 brucellosis from its wildlife within Yellowstone
77 National Park. It shall maintain its bison herd
78 and range health. (2008)
79
80 -Support private property and land lessees'
81 rights in regard to wildlife management (2021).
82
83 -Urge a portion of big game hunting and fishing
84 license fees be earmarked for county road
85 maintenance.
86
87 -Support state management plan for grizzly
88 bears **created in collaboration with family
89 farmers and ranchers.** (2019)
90
91 -Oppose any legislation banning aerial hunting,
92 steel traps, M44's and other approved methods
93 for control of wildlife-incurred damage.
94
95 -Oppose placing the prairie dog on the
96 endangered species list. (2002)

1
2 Urge provisions for working with the
3 landowner on habitat restoration, which benefits
4 both the landowner and the endangered species.
5 (2003)
6
7 -Oppose taking coyote and fox off the predator
8 list through reclassification as furbearers.
9
10 -We support the judicious use of control
11 practices being continued on federal and state
12 lands to control coyotes, feral hogs, **rabid**
13 **skunk populations, burrowing rodents** and
14 other damaging species. (2014)
15
16 -We recognize concerns of the impacts on
17 agricultural lands with the potential listing of
18 endangered species. (2014)
19
20 -Allow ranchers and the public to protect private
21 property from predators that fall under the
22 Endangered Species Act. (2010)
23
24 -The Department of Interior U.S. Fish and
25 Wildlife Service is responsible for the
26 management of wildlife while under the ESA
27 and is responsible for reimbursement of
28 livestock losses caused by said wildlife. (2010)
29
30 -Urge adequate support for wildlife predator
31 control including protected species. (2013)
32
33 -We support funding for the livestock loss
34 program. (2018)
35
36 -Support state management of wolves. (2010)
37
38 **PUBLIC UTILITIES**
39 -Urge continued support of policies granting
40 preference to publicly owned power systems
41 and rural electric cooperatives.
42
43 -Support wholeheartedly the financing and
44 continuation of our Rural Electric Cooperatives
45 and Rural Telephone Associations.
46

47 -Support legislation enacting, upon adequate
48 research, a National Power Grid linking all
49 power planning agencies, including any new
50 sources of power development.
51
52 -Urge that authority of any grid system should
53 never supersede or circumvent Montana Laws
54 on facility siting rate structure, pollution or
55 reclamation.
56
57 -Favor expanding the universal service fund for
58 both landline and cellular at a reasonable cost.
59 (2013 & 2021)
60
61 -Favor universal telephone service at reasonable
62 cost.
63
64 -Rural telephone and electric coops should be
65 exempt from paying fees for right of way on
66 state and federal lands. (1999)
67
68 -Urge continuation of district-based elections
69 for the Montana Public Service Commission.
70
71 -We oppose any efforts to regulate our rural
72 electric cooperatives and rural telephone
73 cooperatives by the Public Service Commission.
74 (2012)
75
76 -Oppose wireless broadband networks that
77 interfere with GPS operations. (2011)
78
79 -Support net neutrality. (2014)
80
81 -Support broadband development to increase
82 access to high-speed internet in rural Montana.
83 (2015)
84
85 -Support disclosure of public utilities executive
86 salaries. (2013)
87
88 -Support Renewable Energy programs and
89 projects. (2020)
90
91 **FOOD AND FOOD SAFETY**
92
93 -Food safety policies can and should protect
94 consumers without limiting farmers, ranchers

1 and small food processors who sell into local
2 and regional markets. (2009)
3
4 -USDA and FDA should deliver educational
5 programs to assist in understanding and meeting
6 FSMA requirements. (2017)
7 -Urge closer control of additives, non-food
8 substitutes and fillers, in foods, which lessen
9 nutritional value.
10
11 -Food and off farm sales must be protected
12 from excessive government regulations. (2009)
13 -Support funding of the Montana Food and
14 Agricultural Development Centers. (2009)
15
16 -Support the development of local and regional
17 food systems and infrastructure that shorten the
18 distance between the farm and table. (2009 and
19 2011)
20
21 -Supports Department of Agriculture, DPHHS
22 and Livestock creating and monitoring
23 standardized state programs for food safety at
24 farmers' markets and within the "cottage" food
25 industry. (2013)
26
27 -Products entering the U.S. must be produced
28 and processed under the same sanitary and
29 phytosanitary restrictions as those imposed on
30 American family farmers and clearly labeled
31 with country of origin (2021).

32 33 **IMITATION OF MEAT**

34
35 -Support meat being defined as flesh from an
36 animal harvested in a traditional way being used
37 as food. (2018)
38
39 -Oppose cellular cultured food being defined as
40 agriculture. (2018)

41 42 **PUBLIC POLICY**

43 -We recognize that there are many ethical,
44 moral, **economic**, and societal issues which are
45 important to us as citizens, but don't relate
46 directly to our organizational purpose. In these
47 areas we encourage our members to utilize,
48 where applicable, this public philosophy when
49 participating in the formulation of such public
50 policy, whether individually or as a part of other

51 groups dedicated to responsible investigation
52 and solutions to these issues. But where public
53 policy involves us as rural citizens and as
54 Farmers Union members, we accept our
55 responsibility to speak to these issues whether in
56 the global arena, on the national scene, or in our
57 state, cities and rural communities.

58
59 -The United States enjoys the safest, highest
60 quality, and most economical food supply in the
61 world. We request our state and national
62 organizations insist that government maintain
63 the high inspection standards for foreign
64 vegetables, meats and food products, which
65 apply to U.S. producers.

66
67 -We encourage people to buy locally produced
68 products. (2013)

69
70 -The strength of the United States is rooted in
71 self-sufficiency in natural resources,
72 particularly food production. We must not
73 become dependent on imported food, which
74 would be vulnerable **to threats**.

75
76 -Federal spending priorities must not
77 shortchange our domestic family farm
78 agriculture.

79
80 -International trade agreements must not include
81 language that allows multinational corporations
82 relief from domestic legislation holding them
83 responsible in areas regarding the environment,
84 labor standards, sustainable family farm and
85 ranch protection, privacy issues, and control
86 over misinformation, hateful and violent
87 communication via social media and all other
88 applications. (2022)

89
90 -Negotiations on trade agreements must be
91 transparent and accessible to agricultural, labor,
92 and environmental organizations in a manner
93 equal to or greater than participation by large
94 multinational corporations and any other
95 impacted entities. (2022)

1 -Encourage removing term limits for public
2 office of Montana office holders.

3
4 -Support universal rates, rules, and regulations
5 on federal land leases.

6 -Support further multi-lateral trade negotiations
7 involving agricultural products provided the
8 following concerns are satisfied before
9 negotiations enter the final phase:

- 10 • Global trade should not drain the wealth
11 of one country for the benefit of others.
12 (2003)
- 13 • Oppose the outsourcing of **State and**
14 **Federal Government** jobs. (2004)
- 15 • There must be a mechanism in place to
16 mitigate the adverse effects of currency
17 exchange rate fluctuations.
- 18 • The sovereignty of the USA and its
19 states to govern within their borders
20 must not be diluted or internationalized
21 at all.
- 22 • We demand a transparent democratic
23 process in trade negotiations and
24 oppose the abdication of Congressional
25 responsibility by granting fast track in
26 the approval of any trade agreement.
27 (2013)
- 28 • Oppose currency manipulation
29 regarding trade. (2015)

30
31 -Oppose misuse of eminent domain laws by
32 private companies and government. Any person
33 or entity should not be allowed to install another
34 system on the taken property unless the owners
35 of each parcel of the condemned property
36 consent and are compensated in an amount
37 negotiated by the owner. The person who lost
38 possession of the land through eminent domain
39 should be released from liability for any
40 damage. (1999)

41
42 -We support efforts to reform eminent domain
43 law. It must include liability of developers for
44 damage to the land. There must be clear
45 evidence that the project will serve Montana's
46 public interest, enforcement of a mitigation

47 plan, and a just compensation for damages.
48 Landowners and tenants should both be
49 involved in the process of granting the
50 easement. (2012) Landowners should also have
51 the option of leasing, rather than deeding the
52 land condemned, with appropriate safeguards
53 for the landowner should the land be eventually
54 returned. (2000)

55
56 -Support reform to Montana's eminent domain
57 laws related to just compensation that provides
58 the landowner with the option to receive
59 payment for their condemned property as an
60 annual rental payment or as a one-time lump
61 sum payment. (2012)

62
63 -Oppose expanding trends to massive land
64 holdings in America by foreign individuals and
65 corporations and foreign and domestic non-
66 profits.

67
68 -Support review of land purchased by foreign
69 individuals and urge legislation to form policy
70 to limit land purchased by out-of-state foreign
71 individuals or organizations. (2010)

72
73 -Eliminate foreign ownership of large food
74 processing entities. (2020)

75
76 -Encourage the FTC and DOJ to investigate
77 agriculture industry corporate mergers for
78 violations under anti-monopolization and pro-
79 competition laws. (2017)

80
81 -Support volunteer fire departments and
82 EMT's. (2019)

83
84 **-Support state and local involvement in the**
85 **creation of any national monument. (2023)**

86
87 -Support and protect the US Antiquities Act of
88 1906. (2011)

89
90 **DATA OWNERSHIP & ACQUISITION**

91
92 -All data collected on an agricultural operation
93 is the exclusive property of the operation and
94 its management. Storage and use of such data
95 should be strictly prohibited without the well-

1 defined legal consent of such individuals.
2 (2015)
3
4 -Farmers should have the right to opt out of
5 data harvest, and all harvested data should have
6 strict oversight. (2022)
7
8 -Oppose the use of drones for unauthorized
9 surveillance of agricultural operations and
10 invasion of personal privacy. (2013)

11 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

12 -Support expansion of public transportation in
13 Montana to better serve rural communities.
14 (2013)

15
16
17 -Support continuation of the Essential Air
18 Service subsidy so that air links serving
19 Montana's smaller cities can continue to operate.

20
21 **-Call for an upgraded, efficient public**
22 **passenger transportation system that reaches**
23 **rural communities. (2023)**

24 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

25
26
27 -Urge federal and state government to expand,
28 invest, and improve the instate investment and
29 loan programs.

30
31 -Urge federal and state government to invest in
32 infrastructure needed for rural communities to
33 meet their economic opportunities.

34
35 -Continue to support federal and statewide
36 efforts by regional economic development
37 programs that benefit agriculture such as the
38 Food and Agriculture Development Centers and
39 the Montana Cooperative Development Center.

40
41 -Encourage federal and state government to help
42 fund the startup or continuation of local food
43 processors. (2020)

44 TAXATION

45
46 - ~~S~~upports the concept that taxes are levied to
47 provide services people cannot provide
48 efficiently for themselves based on the
49 following principles: (1990)

- 50 • Property taxes are a stable source of
- 51 revenue and should be based on
- 52 equitable appraisal. (1990)
- 53 • Income taxes based on ability to pay are
- 54 the fairest method to generate revenue.
- 55 (1990)
- 56 • Taxes on business should not be
- 57 restrictive, but appropriate to their use of
- 58 public services. (1990)

59 **-Support rebalancing the tax burden between**
60 **corporate, small business, residential and**
61 **agricultural taxpayers. (2023)**

62
63 -Oppose any effort to limit the right of states to
64 tax their natural resources.

65
66 -Agricultural "inventories" should not be taxed
67 if business inventories are exempt from
68 taxation.

69
70 -Support ~~R~~ural Micro Business Tax Credit
71 **values that are inflation-adjusted. (2010)**

72
73 -Request development of methods requiring
74 absentee mineral interest owners to share the tax
75 burden now borne solely by the surface owner.

76
77 -Encourage tax exemptions for energy saving
78 devices.

79
80 -Oppose any general sales or value added tax at
81 either the state or federal level

82
83 **-Urge the Montana legislature to remove all**
84 **tax advantages that are intended for**
85 **agriculture, from being utilized by non-**
86 **agricultural operations. (2023)**

87
88 -Support a fair and equitable timber tax.

89
90 -Support fair and equitable taxation of
91 marijuana

92
93 -Encourage increases in marijuana and tobacco
94 taxes for uses that would benefit the public
95 good. (2020)

96 Fair Market Value

97
98 -Support fair and equitable valuations for all
99 agricultural operations.

100
101 -Support a land classification system, which
102 assures uniform and equitable assessed values,

1 which must be straightforward and easy for
2 taxpayers to understand.

3

4 -Classification should be based on productive
5 capacity of the different soil types, based on
6 sound science and taking into consideration the
7 influence of climate on agricultural production.

8

9 -We support property tax reform to more
10 adequately reflect land use. We seek to have
11 material participation as the basis for
12 classification as agricultural production land.
13 (2018)

14

15 -Expand the tax credit to include leasing land
16 to beginning farmers. (2014)

17

18 -Ask that property owners be granted the lowest
19 land classification on all private land used for
20 public roads and stream beds which are required
21 to be open for public use.

22

23 -Support a continual review of all tax-exempt
24 property.

25

26 **Estate**

27 -In lieu of estate tax repeal, we support estate tax
28 relief for family-owned farms, ranches and
29 small businesses in order to facilitate the
30 transfer of those enterprises to the next
31 generation. We also recommend:

32 1) Opposing any reductions to any federal
33 estate tax exemptions. (2016)

34 2) Simplify the exemption qualification
35 rules and requirements;

36 3) Implement graduated rates, and;

37 4) Retain current Ag exemptions. (2005)

38

39 -Encourage that inheritance taxes on
40 agricultural land be eliminated if land is passed
41 to direct heirs and remains in agricultural use,
42 operated by them, for at least 5 years.

43

44 -Support estate transfers at fair market value.
45 (2017)

46

47 -Support a reasonable federal gift tax credit to
48 children of farm families in recognition of their

49 contribution to the business when the farm is
50 incorporated and stock is distributed.

51

52 -Oppose the repeal of agriculture homestead
53 exemption. (2018)

54

55 **Utilities**

56 -Support the Montana Electric Cooperatives'
57 Association in its efforts to retain the existing
58 property tax rates on electric transmission and
59 distribution facilities. We oppose imposition of
60 an excise or sales tax on electric utility
61 customers.

62

63 -Call on the State of Montana to require
64 investor-owned utilities and corporations to pay
65 taxes on the declared value of the property,
66 which is then used for the purpose of
67 ratemaking.

68

69 **Transportation**

70 -Oppose any increase in the Farm Gross Vehicle
71 Weight tax.

72

73 -Urge that full, realistic and accurate values be
74 used for taxing railroads operating property in
75 the State of Montana.

76

77 -Oppose suspension of the fuel tax due to the
78 fact that fuel taxes generated are being spent to
79 match Federal highway monies that create
80 good paying jobs and a healthy highway
81 construction program in Montana. (2005)

82

83 -Oppose any effort to increase motor fuel taxes
84 and divert the revenue into the general fund at
85 either the state or national level.

86

87 **Worker's Compensation**

88 -Urge continued efforts to improve the operation
89 of the Workman's Compensation program,
90 including closing "fraud loopholes".

91

92 -Support a single classification for all
93 agricultural operations within Montana for
94 Worker's Compensation. (2015)

95

1 -Oppose the privatization of the Montana State
2 Fund. (2021)

3 4 **MEDICAL CARE**

5 6 **Support increased telehealth and** 7 **telemedicine access. (2023)**

8
9 -Support 100% deductions for health insurance
10 premiums of the self-employed and retired.
11 (1994)

12
13 -Urge a cooperative effort between all health
14 care and educational agencies to seek a solution
15 to the critical shortages of health care personnel,
16 particularly in our rural health care facilities.
17 (1991)

18
19 -Urge cost containment be an element in any
20 health care plan.

21
22 -Urge the Congress of the United States to enact
23 comprehensive health care reform that provides
24 all American citizens an affordable public
25 option. (2009)

26
27 **Increase access to and** oppose cuts in health
28 care benefits and all premium rate increases to
29 all Medicare and Medicaid recipients and
30 veterans. **(2023)**

31
32 Urge recruitment of primary care physicians to
33 rural Montana communities. (2013)

34
35 **Increase support for rural emergency**
36 **medical services. (2023)**

37
38 - Urge increased **support of and access to** home
39 health care for rural Montanans. (2013)

40
41 **Increase support for critical access hospitals,**
42 **rural health clinics and assisted living**
43 **facilities. (2023)**

44
45 **Support increased funding for home health,**
46 **emergency medicine, increased use of**
47 **telemedicine, population health and care**

48 **coordination for our rural**
49 **communities.(2023)**

50
51 -Support funding for mental health **and**
52 **substance abuse and addiction** resources
53 especially for rural communities. (2019)

54
55 -Support Medicare and Medicaid's ability to
56 negotiate for lower prescription drug costs.

57
58 -Support allowing importation of generic and
59 name brand prescription drugs from countries
60 with similar or equal to regulatory oversight as
61 compared to the United States. (2021)

62 63 **SOCIAL SECURITY**

64 -Oppose any cuts in either benefits or cost of
65 living increases for Social Security recipients.
66 (2021)

67
68 -Oppose any changes in the program, which
69 would raise or move the retirement age-

70
71 -Oppose deferral or cutting of payroll taxes,
72 which would jeopardize the sustainability of
73 Social Security. (2020)

74
75 -Oppose taxing of Social Security benefits by
76 the state of Montana.

77
78 -Support raising the maximum income level
79 upon which a person is required to pay social
80 security taxes in order to maintain solvency of
81 the Social Security System. (1999)

82 83 **RURAL SOCIAL ISSUES AND CIVIL** 84 **RIGHTS**

85
86 -Support equality under law for all citizens
87 regardless of race, age, gender, sexual
88 orientation, ability and religion. (2014)

89
90 -Urge the federal and state government to
91 continue funding the Experience Works
92 Program.

1 -Support and urge recognition of the importance
2 of Senior Citizen's Centers as a vital function in
3 our communities.
4
5 -Support the continuation of nutrition programs
6 for people of all ages as well as other beneficial
7 programs.
8
9 -The United States Postal Service provides
10 critical services to Montanans, and we demand
11 a financially solvent, widespread, reliable and
12 timely system through:
13
14 -Retaining **existing** rural Post Offices.
15
16 -Support reforms to the Postal Service
17 that would increase solvency by
18 changing the congressional mandate that
19 pensions be prepaid in advance
20
21 -Support fair and equitable service fees
22
23 -Insist on current services through
24 offices and blue boxes be maintained or
25 expanded.
26
27 -Oppose any privatization of the Postal
28 Service. (2020)
29
30 -Oppose right-to-work legislation.
31
32 -Support an equitable minimum wage. (1990)
33
34 -Oppose the intimidation and harassment of
35 federal, state, county, and local officials while
36 carrying out their appointed duties. (2021)
37
38 -The right to vote is fundamental for our
39 democracy and must be preserved and
40 encouraged. (2022)
41
42 -Promote voting processes which secures the
43 ease of access to voting by all citizens, including
44 but not limited to mail-in ballots, ballot drop
45 boxes, early voting, convenient access to polling
46 places, and same day registration. (2022)

47
48 -Oppose the intimidation and/or harassment of
49 voters, in local, state, and national elections,
50 while exercising their right to vote. (2022)
51
52 -Oppose undermining the will of the people, as
53 expressed by the public vote, by state
54 legislators, and other public officials. (2022)
55
56 **FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND**
57 **REGULATIONS**
58 -Require adequate compensation for land and/or
59 relocation of facilities condemned under the
60 Flood Plain Act by the federal government.
61 -Urge setting fair and equitable rental fees on
62 state land, and an accurate evaluation of
63 production potential based upon land
64 classification.
65
66 -Urge redefinition of "Public Use" to curb
67 abuses by questionable "Public Need"
68 applications.
69
70 -Request a study of the cost of liability
71 insurance, including both high punitive damage
72 awards and limitation of awards.
73
74 -Ask that federally funded food programs in
75 schools and at institutions and military
76 installations use meat and dairy products
77 produced and purchased in the United States.
78
79 -Support current child labor regulations for
80 agriculture. (2011)
81
82 -An exemption for agricultural use for above-
83 ground petroleum storage of up to 10,000
84 gallons should be granted by the EPA. (2014)
85
86 -Oppose the transfer of all federal lands to state
87 and local control. (2014)
88
89 -Support farm equipment owners and operators
90 having the right and ability to repair their own
91 equipment. (2016)
92

1 -Oppose Federal requirements to have a locator
2 service check every spot that a soil sample is to
3 be taken. (2016)

4

5 **FOREIGN POLICY**

6 -Oppose withholding agricultural food products,
7 exported or imported, at the State Department
8 level as a tool in foreign policy.

9 **ORGANIZATION POLICY**

10 -We believe in the benefits of a grass roots
11 organization.

12

13 -Montana Farmers Union is non-partisan and
14 does not endorse candidates or provide financial
15 support; members are encouraged to participate
16 in the activities of the political party of their
17 choice.

18

19 -To be an effective force, members must be
20 involved in the organization. Such involvement
21 demands communication and motivational
22 focus from its leadership in order to accomplish
23 its goals, to develop the talents of the
24 membership and to foster feelings of self-worth
25 as individuals and as a group.

26

27 -Develop programs to increase interaction of
28 agricultural and non-agricultural groups with
29 the purpose of achieving common goals. (2013)

30

31 **ORGANIZATION PROGRAM**
32 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

33

34 **NATIONAL FARMERS UNION**

35 -Urge the establishment of affiliate member
36 relationships with like-minded organizations.
37 Such relationships could enhance lobbying
38 efforts and government policy preparation.
39 (2005)

40

41 -Strengthen ties and communication with
42 member state organizations.

43

44 -Encourage membership and other
45 organizations to explore and develop
46 long- range farm programs.

47

48 -Hold conventions in states with a large rural
49 population and with significant Farmers Union
50 membership amenable to farmer and rancher
51 seasonal schedules.

52

53 -Hold Convention before Congress returns to
54 session so that national policy is consistent
55 throughout the time that Congress is in session
56 for that calendar year. (2015)

57

58

59

60

61

62 **MONTANA FARMERS UNION**

63 -Encourage MFU members to run for office and
64 to participate in community, state, and national
65 activities and offices.

66

67 -Implement the expansion of all facets of
68 traditional and non-traditional membership,
69 including associate memberships.

70

71 -Hold seminars for leadership development.

72

73 -Encourage coverage of agricultural
74 information and education in Montana media,
75 and show appreciation when such coverage
76 appears.

77

78 -Provide an arena for dialogue among the
79 membership and between farm organizations
80 concerning farm programs.

81

82 -Continue a positive public relations role with
83 other organizations, groups and individuals to
84 further the understanding of agricultural issues.

85

86 -Keep membership informed as to state and
87 national legislative and organizational
88 developments.

89

90 -Provide non-partisan information on all
91 candidates for public office together with
92 judicial candidates and include voting records
93 on issues pertinent to the Farmers Union and its
94 policies and programs.

95

96 -Urge expansion of agricultural coalition to
97 include all agricultural organizations. (2013)

98

99 -Support and continue to use social media as a
100 channel of communication for MFU news and
101 events. (2012)

102

103 -Encourage member and youth to use their
104 talents in the Farmers Union and in civic affairs.

1
2 -Support creation, expansion, and
3 communication of and with active locals. (2013
4 & 2021).

5
6
7 **ORGANIZATION EDUCATION POLICY**

8 -An educated, involved membership is the
9 essential ingredient in the Farmers Union if our
10 membership participation and governance is to
11 be effective.

12
13 -Support organizational education incorporating
14 Farmers Union philosophy as a source of
15 renewed commitment and as a means of
16 organizational development so that our
17 agricultural vocation and our rural communities
18 may benefit.

19
20 -Promote programs designed to assist Montana
21 Farmers Union members in areas pertinent to
22 their lives as agriculturists: economics, money
23 creation, consumer education and the broad
24 range of problems faced by producers and to
25 assist improving the system of marketing.

26
27 -Install a program to educate the public about
28 the accomplishments of the American family
29 farmer, including their high-quality productivity
30 and environmental awareness. The program is
31 to include how the U.S. farm policy works to
32 ensure affordable food for the entire nation and
33 the small part of the Ag budget the farmer
34 receives.

35
36 -Promote member attendance at conferences to
37 educate themselves about the importance of
38 their involvement in family farming.

39
40 -Urge continued support of land transfer
41 programs to connect beginning farmers with
42 retiring farmers. (1992 & 2021)

43
44 -Link with other state and national groups to
45 research and develop farm programs and
46 policies.

47
48 -Support the development and use of Arrowpeak
49 Camp for cooperative, legislative, educational
50 opportunities and membership use.

51
52 -Establish short-term and long-term educational
53 goals for all age groups.

54
55
56
57
58
59 **2024 SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS**

60
61 **Right to Repair**

62 Montana Farmers Union demands the right for
63 farmers to repair our own equipment.
64 Equipment manufacturers refuse access or
65 charge exorbitant prices for technical advisor
66 software needed to troubleshoot equipment.
67 Almost all newer equipment utilizes electronic
68 control units to control equipment operation.
69 Without the software and hardware needed to
70 troubleshoot farmers and ranchers are forced to
71 use the dealer for minor and major repairs. The
72 cost of repairs and downtime has a severe
73 impact on our bottom line and adds undue
74 stress to our lives. Farmers, ranchers, and
75 independent repair technicians need fair access
76 to the tools necessary for repairing equipment.

77
78 **Meat Processors Curriculum**

79 The Covid pandemic put a microscope on our
80 food supply chain, and it is broken. Local
81 butchers are struggling to find skilled labor to
82 keep up with demand. MFU supports
83 developing curriculum and apprenticeship
84 programs to train people in all facets of meat
85 processing.

86
87 **Fairness for Farmers**

88 Food security is of major concern to American
89 consumers in a changing world. Adopting
90 policies that address food security will be of
91 great benefit to our producers and offer
92 protections to consumers. For too long,
93 producers and consumers have been subject to
94 “cheap food policy”, which gives corporate
95 monopolies control of our food dollar and
96 furthering food inequality.

1 Supply chain issues will continue into the future
2 caused in part by corporate consolidation and
3 trade wars.

4
5 Foreign nations and large corporate monopolies
6 have been allowed to manipulate markets and
7 supply chains for far too long, endangering the
8 sustainability of family agriculture and putting
9 consumers at risk of food shortages. We resolve
10 that:

- 11 • Urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to
12 follow through with anti-trust
13 investigations in the agricultural sector
14 and prosecute any violators of the laws
15 in place.
- 16 • GIPSA must be fully reinstated and
17 enforced.
- 18 • We must minimize the foreign influence
19 and control of crop production supplies
20 in the United States.
- 21 • Encourage domestic production of
22 commodity inputs.
- 23 • The commodity loan program must be
24 changed, to include more crops, and a
25 loan rate that reflects 85% of the parity
26 price for a given commodity. This will
27 both provide producers with a higher,
28 more stable price and refill our strategic
29 commodity reserves, furthering our food
30 security.
- 31 • Communities and local governments
32 should be involved in aiding
33 policymakers in the creation of local
34 supply chains.
- 35 • Encourage federal and state
36 governments to help fund the startup or
37 continuation of local food processors
38 and distributors.

39
40 **Farm Bill**

41 Strengthen the farm safety net through
42 increased price-based triggers to reflect higher
43 prices and input costs.
44

45 Expand and enhance permanent disaster
46 programs so that family farmers and ranchers
47 can recover quickly.

48
49 Expand conservation programs to help family
50 farmers and ranchers enhance good
51 conservation practices and address the climate
52 crisis.

53
54 Promote resilient regional food systems and
55 diverse markets.

56
57 Support adding a Competition Title to the Farm
58 Bill.

59 Support a strong Nutrition Title.

60
61 Increased baseline funding is needed.

62
63
64 **2023-24 Resolutions Committee**

- 65 Erik Somerfeld, Power, Chair
- 66 Tammy Copenhaver, Rudyard
- 67 John Wicks, Ledger
- 68 Steve Dagger, Dixon
- 69 Linda Kiltz, Kalispell
- 70 Carah Ronan, Laurel
- 71 Paul Neubauer, Havre
- 72 Ben Peterson, Judith Gap
- 73 Walter Schweitzer, Geysler, MFU President
- 74 Rachel Prevost, MFU Staff
- 75 Jasmine Krotkov, MFU Staff

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87

Glossary

1000 Bird Exemption – Limited provisions of the Poultry Product Inspection Act (PPIA) apply to poultry growers who slaughter no more than 1,000 poultry in a calendar year for use as human food. A person may slaughter and process poultry that he or she raised on his or her premises and they may distribute such poultry without mandatory inspection when five criteria are met.

APH – Actual Production History

APHIS – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

CAFO – Concentrated animal feeding operations

CBB – Cattlemen’s Beef Board

CCC – Commodity Credit Corporation

CDL – Commercial Driver’s License

CHS – Formerly Cenex Harvest States Cooperative

COOL – Country of Origin Labeling

CRP – Conservation Reserve Program

CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

DEQ – Department of Environmental Quality

DPHHS – Department of Health & Human Services

DSA – Designated Surveillance Area

EIS – Environmental Impact Study

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

ESA – Endangered Species Act

FDA – Food and Drug Administration

FSA – Farm Service Agency

GIPSA – Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration Rule

GE – Genetically engineered

GMO – Genetically modified organism

GPS – Global positioning system

GRAS – Generally Recognized As Safe

GVW – Gross Vehicle Weight

MFU – Montana Farmers Union

NAIS – National Animal Identification System

NFU – National Farmers Union

NRCS – Natural Resource and Conservation Service

PARITY – The average regional cost of production of a commodity

RECD – Rural Economic Community Development programs

RFS – Renewable Fuel Standard

RMA – Risk Management Agency

TIP – Transitions Incentive Program. The 2008 Farm Bill includes a brand new provision in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for a transition option for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

US Antiquities Act of 1906 – *An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities* is an act passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, 1906, giving the

President of the United States authority to, by executive order restrict the use of particular public land owned by the federal government.

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

Universal Service Fund – “The Telecommunications Act of 1996 expanded the traditional definition of universal service - affordable, nationwide telephone service to include among other things rural health care providers and eligible schools and libraries.” *(Source: Federal Communications Commission)*

Universal Telephone Service – “Prior to the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Universal Service Fund (USF) operated as a mechanism by which interstate long distance carriers were assessed to subsidize telephone service to low-income households and high-cost areas” *(Source: Federal Communications Commission)*

WWAMI – Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho medical education program

WICHE – Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

WTO – World Trade Organization – body created in the last major trade agreement that handles disputes between signatory nations to the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

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