

## 2025 Priorities

<b>Food Security</b>	<b>Health Care</b>	<b>Competition</b>	<b>Water and Land Use</b>	<b>Climate Resiliency</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to affordable, quality food is a basic human right</li> <li>- Promote resilient regional food systems and diverse markets</li> <li>- Raise the commodity loan rate to a level that reflects the cost of production, which will encourage a return to commodity reserves</li> <li>- Reinstate mandatory country-of-origin labeling for beef and pork</li> <li>- A label must accurately reflect the contents of the product being sold including country of origin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We believe health care is a fundamental right</li> <li>- Continue to support funding, such as Medicaid Expansion, which directly benefits rural hospitals</li> <li>- Support increased tele-health and telemedicine access</li> <li>- Incentivize providers to practice in rural areas, improving access to and quality of care</li> <li>- Increase access and funding for mental health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and addiction services</li> <li>-Focus on food nutrition education and nutrient dense food to prioritize preventative health care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demand fair prices throughout the food system supply chain</li> <li>- Urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to follow through with anti-trust investigations</li> <li>- Encourage USDA to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act</li> <li>-Support a permanent Special Investigator and Chief Competition Officer within USDA</li> <li>-Support including a competition title in the Farm Bill</li> <li>-Support agricultural Right to Repair</li> <li>-Support the next generation of family agricultural producers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Support water law with prior appropriations doctrine</li> <li>-Support retaining Montana groundwaters and surface waters for the use of Montanans in Montana</li> <li>- Oppose the drilling of exempt wells that affect existing water users</li> <li>-Support federal and state funding to address the backlog of maintenance on water storage and delivery systems</li> <li>-We only support waste water injection when it has been treated to the minimum standards for irrigation water</li> <li>- Support a farmland and rangeland protection policy to encourage the continuation of agriculture vs urban development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-We recognize the interdependence of climate, soil health, and food production and support efforts to sustain the balance of all three</li> <li>- Promote developing crops, varieties, and animal breeds that perform under extreme circumstances</li> <li>- Partner with rural communities and utilities to increase their use of renewable energy</li> <li>-Encourage the expansion of biofuels</li> <li>-Support Risk Management Agency (RMA) to credit cover crops and intercropping instead of penalizing their use</li> <li>-Support RMA programs to insure all crops and livestock raised in Montana</li> </ul>

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**2024-2025 MONTANA FARMERS UNION  
POLICY AND PROGRAM**

*(Bolded language is new language adopted at  
Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> 109<sup>th</sup> MFU Annual Convention)*

1 **PREAMBLE**

2 **We the members of Montana Farmers Union,**  
3 **advocate for** the preservation of rural  
4 community life and the traditional independence  
5 of farmers living on the family farm.

6  
7 **We believe that the health and prosperity of**  
8 **family farms and rural communities is**  
9 **directly tied to the health and prosperity of**  
10 **humanity at large.**

11  
12 **From our family farms, we welcome with the**  
13 **hand of history, diversity, dignity,**  
14 **compassion and stewardship, opportunities**  
15 **to all families both within our own country**  
16 **and in other lands.**

17  
18 **Our promise, delivered through cooperation,**  
19 **legislation, and education is to continue to**  
20 **strengthen our family farms and cooperative**  
21 **programs that benefit farmers, consumers,**  
22 **laborers and rural communities alike.**

23  
24 We are convinced of the truth and rightness of  
25 the Declaration of Independence and the  
26 Constitution of the United States, its Bill of  
27 Rights and other amendments.

28  
29 **AGRICULTURAL POLICY**

30 -A family farm or structured family agricultural  
31 operation is run by a family (family farm)  
32 assumes the economic risk and makes the  
33 management decisions. (2014)

34

35 - Keep farmers on the farm by leading a national  
36 campaign to promote a price balance between  
37 sales and cost of farm operations.

38

39 -We urge lawmakers to provide **local, state, and**  
40 **federal** legislation to create programs and  
41 remedies for reducing obstacles to beginning  
42 farmers **and ranchers**. We support mentorship  
43 and apprenticeship programs on farms and  
44 ranches. Urge full and continued funding of  
45 **USDA** beginning or young farmer and rancher  
46 programs. (2023)

47

48 -Montana Farmers Union is committed to all  
49 possible unity among agricultural organizations,  
50 small businesses, labor, religious and  
51 conservation groups in the state of Montana.

52

53 -We oppose consolidation of farmland  
54 ownership commodity manufacturing,  
55 processing and storage facilities in the hands of  
56 a few. Instead, we support a climate which will  
57 permit family-based farms to flourish including;  
58 availability of monetary support, adequate credit  
59 opportunity, fair international trade and  
60 equitable profitability for agricultural  
61 producers.

62

63 -Advocate and urge funding for conservation  
64 including soil, water, atmosphere and energy as  
65 a responsible economic investment in the future.

66

67 -Recognize that active participation in the  
68 political process is necessary at the local, state,  
69 national and international levels to achieve  
70 equity for the agricultural industry.

71

72 -Support like-minded organizations in their  
73 efforts to support the economic viability of  
74 agricultural producers. (2013)

75

76 **AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM**

77 -Support a Farm Program that provides adequate  
78 support to the producers and that support be  
79 provided at the grassroots level.

80

81 -Support a farm program that emphasizes the  
82 importance of food security to our nation. Refer  
83 to the farm program as the "National Food  
84 Security Program". (2006)

85

86 -Encourage farm policy that incentivizes  
87 sustainable and regenerative agriculture to  
88 combat issues facing the environment, soil

1 health, drought, flood, financial risk, food  
2 security and rural quality of life. (2021)

3  
4 -Encourage the use of RMA yield data in  
5 determining payment eligibility for farm  
6 programs. (2016)

7  
8 -Producer safety nets should guarantee a  
9 revenue level that assures producers the ability  
10 to cover all costs of production. (2016)

11  
12 -Call for strict enforcement of realistic payment  
13 limitations. (2000)

14  
15 -Urge full funding, staffing and training for FSA  
16 and NRCS in county-based offices. Oppose  
17 consolidation of county offices. (1999)

18  
19 -Urge flexibility on conservation compliance  
20 plans within FSA-NRCS programs and allow  
21 local boards more authority.

22  
23 **PARITY**  
24 -Urge that the price of raw materials be raised to  
25 historical parity levels at the marketplace.

26  
27 -Urge the historic parity formula (1949) be  
28 retained as the official measure of return to  
29 agriculture and recommend that Congress set up  
30 a program to fairly compensate the farmer on the  
31 land. (1990)

32  
33  
34 **COMMODITY LOAN, RESERVE AND**  
35 **PRODUCTION CONTROLS**

36 -A farm program should recognize the market  
37 realities of the fundamentally unique business of  
38 farming. Such a program should include these  
39 basic provisions.

40  
41 -Price and/or income support mechanisms for  
42 agricultural commodities that establishes a floor  
43 under market prices and enables producers to  
44 obtain their income from the marketplace  
45 (2022).

46  
47 -Price supports should primarily be provided by  
48 CCC nonrecourse, commodity loans.

49

50 -Flexible loan maturity periods should be able to  
51 be extended at the discretion of the producer for  
52 up to 18 months, with the producer able to  
53 forfeit after 9 months.

54  
55 - Income support, price support, and CCC loan  
56 rates should be set at levels to ensure producers  
57 receive a fair return on their investment. The  
58 loan rate should not be for less than the USDA  
59 national average cost of production. CCC loan  
60 rates should be adjusted annually to reflect  
61 inflation and productivity.

62  
63 - Income support, price support, and CCC loan  
64 rates should be annually balanced in an upward  
65 manner, to prevent market and planting  
66 distortions.

67  
68 -MFU strongly urges the establishment of a  
69 voluntary, farmer-owned market-driven  
70 inventory system that reduces volatility in  
71 agricultural commodity markets. For such a  
72 system to succeed, we recommend the  
73 following:

74  
75 -USDA will offer per bushel storage rates for  
76 commodities when prices fall below a  
77 designated loan rate, which is set near the  
78 midpoint between the variable and full cost of  
79 production for each commodity. Enrollment in  
80 the storage program will cease when prices  
81 recover.

82  
83 -Farmers may enter any portion of their crop  
84 into storage, which must remain enrolled in the  
85 program until the market price for the  
86 commodity reaches the release price, or  
87 approximately 130 percent of the loan rate.

88  
89 -Economically sound inventory caps should be  
90 set on each commodity. Should the inventory  
91 cap be reached for a commodity, a voluntary set-  
92 aside program may be made available by  
93 USDA.

94

1 -When the release price is reached, the farmer  
2 may sell the commodity into the market or hold  
3 the commodity, but storage rates will cease.

4  
5 -Allowing the Secretary of Agriculture the  
6 authority to manage price-depressing surpluses  
7 by providing producers incentives to plant  
8 dedicated energy crops on acres which are now,  
9 or may be produced, in surplus.

10  
11 -Commodity support based on actual production  
12 history (APH), where available. For cases  
13 without APH, the program yield cannot be lower  
14 than county Farm Service Agency yields.  
15 Additionally, we urge the establishment of APH  
16 floors to protect producers in the event of  
17 successive crop failure brought on by natural  
18 disasters.

19  
20 -Low-interest commodity storage facility loans  
21 should be made available to producers  
22 **including livestock facilities, handling  
23 equipment, and feed storage. (2024)**

24  
25 -Each farm operator and crop share landlord  
26 should be eligible for maximum loan volume  
27 targeted to family farms.

28  
29 -Farmers should have the right to periodically  
30 update acreage bases and proven yields on all  
31 crops for each farm.

32 -Farmers should have the option to store  
33 forfeited commodity and receive storage  
34 payments until final sale is consummated.

35  
36 -Marketing Assistance loans and programs like  
37 the Loan Deficiency Program should be  
38 eliminated because they undermine the benefits  
39 of the commodity loan programs. (2020)

40  
41 **CROPS AND SEED**

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

44  
45 -Urge development of a seed bank program to  
46 preserve genetic diversity and cultural  
47 significance of crops. (2007)

48

49 **-We support continued research and funding  
50 for increased access to ancestral seeds in  
51 Montana's indigenous communities  
52 including, but not limited to: continued  
53 protection, preservation and conservation of  
54 wild foods, fruits, plants and other  
55 indigenous used medicinal plants, as an act of  
56 Indigenous food sovereignty, cultural  
57 knowledge and recovery of traditional  
58 foodways. (2024)**

59  
60 -We support enhancing and diversifying the  
61 genome and plant genetic resource pools,  
62 recognizing farmers' contributions to the  
63 development and conservation of plant genetic  
64 resources by protecting farmers' rights, of  
65 patented plants and plant genetic resources, the  
66 rights of farmers and breeders to save seeds  
67 from all plant varieties and cultivars developed  
68 with public funds and establishing and  
69 maintaining foundation seed banks. (2023)

70  
71 -We oppose the consolidation of seed  
72 companies, and ownership of plant genetics.  
73 (2023)

74  
75 -Streamline the importation of seed for domestic  
76 production. (2014)

77  
78 - Support both seed exchanges and seed libraries  
79 for the open exchange of heirloom and open-  
80 pollinated seeds. (2023)

81 -Increase transparency with producer  
82 participation in the varietal release processes.  
83 (2019)

84  
85 **-Support increased transparency and  
86 education for consumers on seed stock that is  
87 repackaged for retail sale and labeled to  
88 prevent misrepresentation as sourced or  
89 grown local. (2024)**

90  
91 **SPECIALTY CROPS**

92 -MFU recognizes the wide range and diversity  
93 of agricultural and horticultural products grown  
94 by Montana farmers and ranchers and support  
95 research, development and marketing of new  
96 and non-traditional crops and innovative uses of  
97 the more commonly grown crops and their by-  
98 products at regional, state and federal levels.  
99 (2023)

100

1 -We support the Specialty Crop Block Grant  
2 Program (SCB), and encourage continued  
3 research, development and marketing of new  
4 and existing specialty crops in Montana. (2018)

5  
6 -Support development of Montana vineyard  
7 production and marketing through Montana  
8 wineries. (2022)

## 9 10 **HEMP**

11 -Support laws to allow production of Hemp,  
12 including, but not limited to:

- 13 • Ensuring the availability of quality seed
- 14 • Allowing producers to sell and ship seed  
15 across state lines
- 16 • Create a crop insurance program that  
17 covers producers in a manner similar to  
18 other commodities (2019)
- 19 • Encourage MSU and other research  
20 institutions to begin field trials of hemp  
21 in a variety of climates around the state  
22 and region
- 23 • Lobby for hemp to be regulated as a  
24 food, feed, and fiber product by the FDA  
25 and/or USDA
- 26 • A label should accurately reflect the  
27 contents of the product (2020)

## 28 29 **WOOL**

30 -Urge reinstatement of the Wool and Mohair  
31 Act of 1954.

32  
33 **-We support the establishment and  
34 production capacity of domestic wool  
35 processors. (2024)**

36  
37 **-Support marketing, research, and education  
38 efforts to increase the demand for domestic  
39 wool products. (2024)**

## 40 41 **LIVESTOCK**

42 -We support teaching animal welfare, as  
43 opposed to animal rights, through educational  
44 programs and agricultural organizations. We  
45 support domestic animals' access to proper  
46 food, shelter and water for survival. (2014)

47

48 **-We support funding for education, training,  
49 apprenticeships, and startup funding for  
50 large animal vets and vet technicians. (2024)**

51  
52 -Support a fully funded vaccine bank. (2018)

53  
54 -The United States does not have a widespread  
55 occurrence of Bovine Spongiform  
56 Encephalopathy. Therefore, we support no  
57 additional regulation regarding BSE. With the  
58 current ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban in place,  
59 adequate firewalls are in place to assure that the  
60 United States beef supply is safe. (2005)

61  
62 -Yellowstone Bison shall not be relocated to any  
63 other area of Montana without a complete  
64 environmental impact assessment. (2011)

65  
66 **-We support the Bison Conservation  
67 Transfer Program (BCTP) Environmental  
68 Impact Statement (EIS) and continued  
69 efforts of bison management between  
70 National Park Service (NPS), the State of  
71 Montana, Tribes and other federal partners  
72 to balance bison management, while working  
73 with states and tribes to develop a shared  
74 stewardship plan that furthers ecological and  
75 cultural restoration of bison. (2024)**

76  
77 -Oppose the expansion of the DSA (Designated  
78 Surveillance Area) in the absence of brucellosis  
79 confirmed in domestic livestock. (2016)

80  
81 -We support compensation for livestock  
82 producers for testing of herds that have been  
83 state or federally quarantined for disease. (2021)

84  
85 **-Require labeling of any co-mingled meat or  
86 meat products from foreign sources or non-  
87 animal proteins as “co-mingled with foreign  
88 sources” and/or “co-mingled with non-  
89 animal proteins”. (2024)**

90  
91 -Request equitable import and export policies,  
92 inspection standards and recourse to emergency  
93 assistance. (1990)

- 1 -Urge any foreign meats or other food stuffs  
2 entering the United States be subject to the same  
3 standards, which applies to United States meats  
4 and other food stuffs.  
5
- 6 -We oppose the importation of animals and food  
7 stuffs from countries with active Foot and  
8 Mouth Disease. (2015)  
9
- 10 -Support the ban of meat and/or meat products  
11 from the foreign countries that allow use of  
12 medications or additives not approved for use in  
13 the U.S. (2010)  
14
- 15 -Raise the beef check-off rate from \$1 to \$2,  
16 start a second checkoff program under the  
17 Commodity Promotion Research and  
18 Information Act of 1996, **or a beef check-off**  
19 **under Montana State Law**, when the  
20 following changes are made to the beef check  
21 off: (2023)
- 22 • Check-off dollars be used to promote  
23 only livestock born, raised and  
24 processed in the United States. (2013)
  - 25 • Allow Cattlemen’s Beef Board (CBB) to  
26 contract directly with any entity,  
27 **including any national non-profit**  
28 **organizations**, businesses, university  
29 researchers, advertising and marketing  
30 agencies and other consultants. (2008)
  - 31 • Reform the national Beef Board to  
32 reflect proportional representation from  
33 all national agriculture organizations.  
34 (2005)
  - 35 • **Any state check-off should be**  
36 **executed by the existing Montana Beef**  
37 **Council. (2024)**
  - 38 • **All funding should be directed toward**  
39 **promotion and research of Montana**  
40 **beef products and production. (2024)**
  - 41 • Allow for check off expenditures to  
42 protect USA beef and cattle from unfair  
43 trade practices and to protect the U.S.  
44 herd from import practices, which  
45 threaten cattle herd health and beef  
46 consumers. (2005)
- 47 • Allow for check off expenditures to  
48 promote branded products from small  
49 and large packing entities. (2005)
  - 50 • Require all packers to pay into the check  
51 off program when purchasing cattle.  
52 (2005)  
53
- 54 -Support mandatory price and volume reporting  
55 of livestock, including “captive supply” by all  
56 major packers. (2021)  
57
- 58 **-Recognize the potential threat of**  
59 **transmission of avian influenza between wild**  
60 **and domestic populations of birds and**  
61 **livestock. We urge all possible mitigation**  
62 **efforts and use of sound science practices to**  
63 **prevent transmission. (2024)**  
64
- 65 -Recognize the serious threat of West Nile  
66 disease and urge local governments to control  
67 mosquitoes. We recommend education to the  
68 public for protection of humans and livestock  
69 (2003) against the disease.  
70
- 71 -MFU urges the following: (2013)
- 72 • Exclude feeder cattle from the rules and  
73 include funding for state record keeping.  
74 (2011)
  - 75 • We urge the Department of Homeland  
76 Security to provide the full funding  
77 necessary to create and maintain the  
78 database and provide compensation to  
79 producers for their program  
80 implementation costs. (2005)
  - 81 • Mitigate producer liability for  
82 contaminated food products. (2005)
  - 83 • Any National Animal Identification  
84 System (NAIS) should address herd  
85 health only. This system should not  
86 impose any additional costs to the  
87 producer. (2020)
  - 88 • Use of proprietary information should  
89 include clear limits to ensure the  
90 information is not used by packers to  
91 discount producer prices; be subjected to  
92 a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)



- 1 request, or passed to telemarketers, etc.  
2 (2005)
- 3 • Control of the confidential database  
4 needs to remain under the control of the  
5 federal government. (2005)
  - 6 • Access to producer information should  
7 be provided for animal disease and bio  
8 terrorism trace-back only. (2005)
  - 9 • Ensure uniformity of identification  
10 system with tracking technology and  
11 database management. (2005)

12  
13 -We support USDA inspected horse slaughter  
14 facilities in the United States and encourage a  
15 facility be built in Montana. (2013)

16  
17 -Support the judicious use of antibiotics. (2015)

18  
19 -Provide funding to support the Montana  
20 livestock diagnostic laboratory in its entirety.  
21 (2017)

22  
23 -We support Montana Department of Livestock  
24 adoption of the 1000 Bird Exemption. (2014)

## 25 26 **DAIRY**

27 -Supports a national policy establishing an  
28 equitable floor price policy that sets a level that  
29 allows producers to earn a fair return on their  
30 dairy products from the marketplace. (2010)

31  
32 -We urge the passage of a Raw Milk Law that  
33 allows the sale and consumption of raw milk in  
34 Montana under regulation and licensing that  
35 ensures the milk is produced under inspection  
36 and is a safe food product. (2013)

37  
38 -Establish a national mandatory program for  
39 managed growth based on market demand and  
40 price stability. Such a program should increase  
41 farmer profitability by elevating milk prices,  
42 preventing overproduction and reducing milk  
43 price volatility. (2022)

## 44 45 **POLLINATORS**

46 -Continue and expand research and education  
47 aimed at protecting bee health as well as

48 development and enhancement of native  
49 pollinator population.

50  
51 -Support USDA programs that provide financial  
52 support to producers willing to plant pollinator-  
53 friendly habitat. (2020)

54  
55 -Continue collaboration of the chemical  
56 industry and pollinator industry, to provide  
57 education to growers, applicators, and the  
58 public, on the harmful effects of pesticides and  
59 neonicotinoids on pollinator populations,  
60 especially related to colony collapse disorder.

61  
62 -Continue monitoring of pest populations, pest  
63 control methods, as well as pollinator imports  
64 and accidental importation of pests and invasive  
65 species. (2014)

## 66 67 **MARKETING**

68 -Prohibit any one ag commodity organization  
69 from serving as the “prime contractor” for a  
70 publicly funded program but allow all  
71 organizations to participate in approved projects  
72 on a case-by-case basis. (2005)

73  
74 -Encourage the creation of new check-off  
75 programs for emerging commodities. (2014)

76  
77 -Support check-off funds returning to state of  
78 production and oppose double assessments.  
79 (2015)

80  
81 -Support a periodic vote on all check-off  
82 programs (every five years) by a petition of 10%  
83 of producers signing the petition at county FSA  
84 offices. (2005 and 2006)

85  
86 -Urge MFU and NFU to continue to use the  
87 Internet to build a network between family  
88 farmers and consumers to enhance direct  
89 marketing and exchange vital information on  
90 products, nutrition, safety and environmental  
91 concerns. (1999)

92  
93 -Support the concept of working together  
94 through a marketing system, which is  
95 cooperative in nature, fair in application and  
96 open to farmer input in operation. (1990)

- 1 -Encourage the state of Montana to maintain  
2 Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS). (2014)  
3
- 4 -Call for development and implementation of  
5 national legislation prohibiting unreasonable  
6 conduct, such as unjustifiable price  
7 discrimination, by a business that is in a  
8 dominating position in contracting, supplying or  
9 buying agricultural goods or services. (1999)  
10
- 11 -We support state attorney general’s filing suit  
12 to enforce current federal anti-trust laws  
13 including the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the  
14 Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921. The  
15 Federal Trade Commission, Senate Judiciary  
16 Committee and the Department of Justice  
17 should enforce current regulations. If large  
18 concentrations of power still remain, necessary  
19 legislation should be enacted to regulate those  
20 corporations just as we do other monopolistic  
21 entities. (2018)  
22
- 23 -Support USDA’s rulemaking on Packers and  
24 Stockyards Act adding provisions to make it  
25 easier for farmers to legally challenge unfair  
26 practices without a fear of being retaliated  
27 against and address market practices that are  
28 unfair, discriminatory, or deceptive to farmers  
29 and ranchers. Such implementation creates jobs  
30 in rural America, assures competitive markets  
31 and prevents meatpackers from manipulating  
32 the market driving prices lower for farmers.  
33 (2012&2021)  
34
- 35 -Support adequate funding for the state’s  
36 Growth through Agriculture (GTA) program.  
37 (2016)  
38
- 39 -Support the continued use and adequate  
40 funding for the Montana State Grain Lab and the  
41 Montana State Wool Lab (2020).  
42
- 43 -Support adequate funding for research and  
44 inspections of agricultural exports and therefore  
45 issuance of export certificates. (2013)  
46
- 47 -Oppose trade deals that unevenly regulate  
48 imports and exports between the US and other  
49 nations. (2015)  
50
- 51 -Work toward expanding the opportunities in  
52 both the number of crops exported and the value  
53 returned to our member producers from trade  
54 with Cuba and other potential trade countries.  
55 (2003)  
56
- 57 -Support **modernization and expansion** of the  
58 State Meat Inspection Program. (1993)  
59
- 60 -Regulatory change is required, to allow state-  
61 inspected meat to be sold across state lines.  
62 There must be a commitment to funding more  
63 inspectors to aid in the development of more  
64 local processing. (2022)  
65
- 66 -**Support USDA in the use of remote grading  
67 of beef, the availability of equipment, and  
68 training of inspectors. (2024)**  
69
- 70 -A label must accurately reflect the contents of  
71 the product being sold. To maintain their  
72 integrity all USDA certifications must clearly  
73 identify product origin and whether inspection  
74 or auditing was done by a third party. (2021)  
75
- 76 -Urge Country of Origin labeling of all  
77 agricultural commodities and processed food  
78 products sold in the U.S. (2000)  
79
- 80 -**We support truth in labeling with Organic,  
81 Local, Regenerative, Made/Grown in  
82 Montana so consumers can make true,  
83 informed decisions and are not misled. (2024)**  
84
- 85 -We declare that all producers receive full  
86 indemnity from the agricultural activities  
87 occurring on lands not under their ownership or  
88 management that they be held harmless from the  
89 intrusion of GMO and GE crops upon their lands  
90 and the associated costs and burdens of said  
91 intrusion; and that they receive full immunity  
92 against litigation in cases of GMO and GE drift  
93 contamination into their lands. (2013)  
94
- 95 -Premiums should be paid for wheat weighing  
96 above 60 pounds per bushel, just as wheat is  
97 discounted below 60 pounds per bushel. (2003)

1 -Support wheat pricing of protein based on  
2 tenths of percent rather than quarters.

3  
4 -Urge congressional investigation of  
5 commodity futures trading, especially index  
6 funds, to determine any adverse effects the trade  
7 might have on farm commodity prices.

### 8 9 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

10 -Support Risk Management Programs such as  
11 the State Hail and Federal Crop Insurance  
12 Compensation Programs as a part of a viable  
13 farm program.

14  
15 -Increase bond percent up to 4% per location per  
16 company and support option of fines by  
17 Department of Agriculture to ensure producers  
18 adequate compensation should a commodity  
19 dealer fail before paying producer. (2013)

20  
21 -Support changes to RMA to encourage more  
22 diverse and effective cropping systems. (2019)

23  
24 -Support RMA to credit cover crops instead of  
25 penalizing their uses. (2022)

26  
27 **-Support RMA to allow use of intercropping  
28 and companion cropping. (2024)**

29  
30 -Support RMA programs to insure all crops  
31 grown in the state. (2022)

32  
33 -Support crop insurance incentives for soil  
34 health improvements and climate-friendly  
35 conservation activities. (2022)

36  
37 -Support a cap on the amount of subsidy an  
38 individual can receive for federal crop  
39 insurance. (2023)

40  
41 **-Support that funding must be directed  
42 to family farms rather than large corporate  
43 farms. (2024)**

44  
45 **-Allow a dual enrollment option for ARC and  
46 PLC, which allows producers to receive the  
47 higher of the two calculated payments. (2024)**

48

49 **-We support Livestock Risk Protection  
50 (LRP) and support expansion to include  
51 sheep. (2024)**

### 52 53 **CONSERVATION**

54 -Support keeping EQIP and CSP as separate  
55 programs. (2018)

56  
57 -Support the expansion of the Montana State  
58 Nursery to meet the demands of conservation  
59 programs. (2023)

60  
61 -Support expansion of the Conservation  
62 Stewardship Program to allow more producers  
63 the opportunity to enroll. (2016)

64  
65 -Support broad-based agricultural conservation  
66 practice and development programs in the State  
67 of Montana.

68  
69 -Protect agricultural lands through conservation  
70 easements or similar contract arrangements to  
71 preserve open land. (2007)

72  
73 **-A new farm bill must keep the additional  
74 funding that was added to conservation  
75 programs with the Inflation Reduction Act.  
76 (2024)**

77  
78 -Encourage sufficient funding through  
79 appropriation and cost share programs. (2016)

80  
81 -Develop conservation dams that incorporate  
82 flood control and domestic, municipal,  
83 agricultural, and recreational uses.

84  
85 -Provide adequate off-stream storage to reserve  
86 water for agricultural uses. (1990)

87  
88 -Require effective management of existing  
89 dams to prevent flooding of agricultural land.  
90 (2022)

91  
92 -Require effective management of existing  
93 dams to provide adequate water for irrigation  
94 and fisheries. (2023)

95  
96

1 -Support adequate funding for coordination of  
2 statewide weed control and nursery inspections  
3 while ensuring on-going weed control on state  
4 and federal lands, county roadways, railroad  
5 rights-of-way and state and private lands. (2014)

6  
7 -Support **education and control of known and**  
8 **emerging** invasive species to preserve Montana  
9 natural resources. (2010)

10  
11 -To keep rural communities, farms and ranches  
12 viable, we encourage new CRP programs with a  
13 25 percent maximum acreage enrollment per  
14 farm rather than 25 percent of a county's  
15 farmland. (2003)

16  
17 -Allow CRP lands to be withdrawn early from  
18 their contracts in order to be put into production  
19 for bio-crops. There would be no penalties for  
20 early withdrawal as long as the land was kept in  
21 bio-crop production for the term of the original  
22 CRP contract. (2006)

23  
24 -Encourage the retention and increased funding  
25 of the Transition Incentive Program (TIP).  
26 (2011)

## 27 28 **RESEARCH**

29 -The Montana legislature shall be mandated to  
30 provide adequate funding for personnel,  
31 facilities and equipment at the Agricultural  
32 Research Stations and the Cooperative  
33 Extension Service. (2010)

34  
35 -Support an increase in the Wheat & Barley  
36 Committee Check-off Program to provide  
37 funding for research with an emphasis on  
38 Agriculture Research Stations. (2010)

39  
40 -Oppose corporate donor generated funds for Ag  
41 research, facilities, and capital equipment  
42 without adequate care to preserve the integrity  
43 of research and accountability to the taxpayer of  
44 the land grant university system. (2004)

45  
46 -Oppose the use of public resources for  
47 development of proprietary products. MFU  
48 supports increased funding for public research  
49 at land grant universities. (2013)

50

51 -Support publicly funded research to develop  
52 improved crop varieties, including both  
53 conventional, and organic as well as new uses,  
54 industrial and otherwise, which will create new  
55 markets for agricultural products (2021).

56  
57 -Support development of effective, low-cost  
58 alternative inputs and research into  
59 opportunities to capture an economic return by  
60 switching to inputs derived from crop by-  
61 products. (2021)

62  
63 -Support research that will provide a better  
64 understanding of what we produce and its effect  
65 on human health, as well as support targeting  
66 improved production, management, and  
67 marketing characteristics. (2012)

68  
69 -Urge expansion of Agricultural Experiment  
70 Station's development of fertilizing methods,  
71 livestock breeding, farming techniques (organic  
72 and biological) and new equipment that will  
73 help preserve a farmer's competitive position.

74  
75 -Encourage the Montana Agricultural  
76 Experiment Stations to continue research that is  
77 economically feasible and sustainable for family  
78 farms and ranches.

79  
80 -Encourage research that **develops and** delivers  
81 practical information to farmers and ranchers to  
82 assist in adopting practices to mitigate climate  
83 change (2022).

84  
85 **-We encourage funding for research on the**  
86 **impacts of artificial intelligence on**  
87 **agricultural operations in Montana. (2024)**

88  
89 -Favor the establishment of an acreage  
90 dedicated to a long-term organic cropping  
91 system at each of the state experiment stations,  
92 for the purpose of conducting research in areas  
93 such as crop rotations and yield trials, soil  
94 nutrition, weed and pest management and, plant  
95 disease, etc. (2004)

96  
97 -Support public funding allocations for organic  
98 production systems that are commensurate with

1 organic’s contribution to the overall agricultural  
2 economy. (2021)

3  
4 -Urge that Agricultural Experiment Stations  
5 make effective use of farmer advisory  
6 committees.

7  
8 **PESTICIDE REGULATIONS AND**  
9 **PESTICIDE APPLICATORS**

10 -Require safe and proper handling, marketing  
11 and disposal of chemicals to ensure the safety of  
12 people and the environment.

13  
14 -Request adequate state and federal funding for  
15 the Department of Agriculture and MSU  
16 Extension to perform its duties in licensing  
17 applicators, and monitoring of pesticides.

18  
19 -Recognize the use of pesticides as a valuable  
20 tool in conventional ag. (2019)

21 -Support requiring adequate insurance coverage  
22 for commercial applicators. (2019)

23  
24 -We support regulations that include protections  
25 for producers of non-target crops that incur  
26 damage due to drift from any crop applications  
27 onto their property. (2023)

28  
29 -We support funding additional avenues for  
30 applicators to implement the use of smart or  
31 precision spraying systems to reduce pesticide  
32 use, drift and resistance. (2023)

33  
34 **TRANSPORTATION AND RAILROADS**

35 -Encourage establishing a coordinated national  
36 system of water, rail and air transportation that  
37 will serve both rural and urban areas at  
38 reasonable rates.

39  
40 -Urge reinstatement of the Rail Service  
41 Competition Council. (2020)

42  
43 -Support strong farmer and rancher  
44 representation on the State Department of  
45 Transportation. (1992)

46

47 -Farm equipment operators should be exempt  
48 from Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)  
49 requirements. (2011)

50  
51 -Support an electronic log device waiver for  
52 livestock haulers. (2017)

53  
54 -Support extended hours of service exemption  
55 for agricultural commodities. (2019)

56  
57 -Urge special emphasis in addressing the  
58 crumbling infrastructure in the immediate  
59 future. Getting crops to market requires special  
60 handling, speed and affordability and if not  
61 addressed quickly is not only a safety issue but  
62 a national security problem. (2012)

63  
64 -Oppose indiscriminate freight rate increases.

65  
66 -Support the continuing viability of the less-  
67 than-shuttle facility system of elevators in  
68 Montana which enhances diversity of rail  
69 movements by Montana farmers’ production.  
70 We oppose any actions by railroads that will not  
71 encourage the long-term viability of the less-  
72 than-shuttle facilities in Montana. (2013)

73  
74 -Ask the Montana State Attorney General and  
75 the United States Anti-Trust Department to  
76 vigorously investigate and enforce laws to  
77 prevent price fixing of retail motor fuels. We ask  
78 that both state and federal funding be  
79 appropriated to enforce anti-trust and predatory  
80 pricing laws. (1999)

81  
82 -Oppose further deregulation of railroads.

83  
84 -Oppose railroad development which would  
85 interfere with or disrupt agricultural production.  
86 (2023)

87  
88 -Support efforts for permanent access or rights-  
89 of-way for ranch and farmlands or infrastructure  
90 impacted by public transportation corridors.  
91 (2023)

92

1 -Work to get rail rates reduced so that they are  
2 comparable to other states and to encourage rail  
3 competition. (2005)

4  
5 -Support a statewide impact analysis of  
6 increased rail traffic with jurisdictional  
7 oversight by the Surface Transportation Board.  
8 (2015)

9  
10 -Support a Southern Montana passenger rail  
11 service from Missoula to Billings. (2020)

12  
13 -Support a shipping weight variance for  
14 livestock transported within Montana. (2018)

15  
16 **-Support the development and expansion of  
17 funding and technology for vehicles powered  
18 by alternative fuels and/or electricity and the  
19 infrastructure to support them. (2024)**

20  
21 **-We support the development and  
22 deployment of plug-in hybrids and all electric  
23 vehicles, and policies that encourage off-peak  
24 charging. (2024)**

25  
26 **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**  
27 -Support expansion of public transportation in  
28 Montana to better serve rural communities.  
29 (2013)

30  
31 -Support continuation of the Essential Air  
32 Service subsidy so that air links serving  
33 Montana's smaller cities can continue to operate.

34  
35 -Call for an upgraded, efficient public passenger  
36 transportation system that reaches rural  
37 communities. (2023)

38  
39 **COOPERATIVE POLICY**  
40 **-Establish and fund curriculum at the high  
41 school and secondary level involving all facets  
42 of the cooperative business model. (2024)**

43  
44 -Cooperation is a guidepost of the Farmers  
45 Union, sharing the organization's triangle with  
46 education and legislation.

47

48 -Support patron-owned, democratically  
49 controlled cooperatives, built on the principle of  
50 one person, one vote, with distribution of  
51 savings in direct proportion to patronage.

52  
53 -Cooperative endeavor is a legitimate and  
54 logical extension enabling farmers to take their  
55 operations into the marketplace and allowing  
56 individual producers to realize the benefits  
57 generated by their production through the sale,  
58 processing, and ultimate purchase by the  
59 consumer.

60  
61 -Because cooperatives are our business, it is  
62 imperative that Farmers Union members  
63 actively support and participate in their local  
64 and regional cooperatives.

65  
66 -Urge Agricultural co-ops and businesses to  
67 have a majority of their board members made up  
68 of agricultural producers (2018).

69  
70 -Support efforts and services keyed to  
71 cooperative principles which are provided by  
72 CHS, Farmers Union Insurance, Rural Electric  
73 Cooperatives, Rural Telephone Associations,  
74 Farm Credit Services, Credit Unions, Bank for  
75 Cooperatives, Council of Cooperatives,  
76 Montana Cooperative Development Center,  
77 Lake County Cooperative Development Center,  
78 irrigation districts, grazing districts and other  
79 cooperatives in the state.

80  
81 -Educate the general public as to the important  
82 role of cooperatives in economic systems.

83  
84 -Establish and continue a positive and  
85 aggressive approach to cooperative education,  
86 and philosophy for Farmers Union members.

87  
88 -Emphasize the need to select cooperative  
89 directors who understand and are loyal to the  
90 ideas of cooperative business principles.

91  
92 -Be ready to work with cooperatives, both local  
93 and regional, in educating employees, directors  
94 and patrons in cooperative philosophy.

95  
96 -Stand ready to assume or contribute leadership  
97 in the development of cooperatives in new  
98 fields, emerging technologies, and  
99 underdeveloped industries.

1 -Maintain an active Young Producers program  
2 and Associate Director program composed of  
3 beginning farmers and ranchers to suggest ways  
4 to involve new and young people in  
5 cooperatives. (2012)

6  
7 -Urge all supply cooperatives to market locally  
8 produced biofuels and lubricants, using locally  
9 sourced feedstocks. (1990 & 2021)

10  
11 -Initiate cooperative camps, conferences, and  
12 seminars with other cooperative enterprises.

13  
14 -We encourage all cooperatives to contribute  
15 education funds to MFU for further cooperative  
16 education. (2023)

17  
18 -Businesses and associations may not use the  
19 word cooperative or its abbreviations in the  
20 promotion of their business unless organized  
21 legally as a cooperative. (2022)

### 22 23 **PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY**

24 -Education is the cornerstone of our democracy.  
25 It has long been regarded as a national ethic,  
26 preceding the establishment of our country as an  
27 independent nation.

28  
29 -Support full funding for Public Schools. (2020)

30  
31 -Reject diverting public funding from public  
32 schools to any charter schools. (2023)

33  
34 -Support equitable, quality, inclusive education  
35 for all levels because this benefits not only  
36 individuals, but our state as well. An educated  
37 citizenry is a social protection and an  
38 unparalleled economic advantage. We regard  
39 education as a public utility, not a fringe benefit.

40  
41 -Promote education in cooperative philosophy  
42 and practical cooperative business operations in  
43 our public schools both locally and with the  
44 Office of Public Instruction and our state  
45 university system.

46  
47 -Support the Agriculture in Montana Schools  
48 program.

49  
50 -Support a Farm to School program that  
51 highlights the core elements of procurement of

52 and education about Montana Agricultural  
53 products, and school gardens. (2010 & 2021)

54 -Urge elected leaders to prioritize equity in  
55 access, quality and funding of educational  
56 opportunity for rural areas at both state and  
57 national levels.

58  
59 **-We support developing curriculum and**  
60 **apprenticeship programs to train people in**  
61 **all facets of meat processing. (2024)**

62  
63 -Urge adequate funding for the **continuation**  
64 **and expansion** of vocational-technical  
65 education.

66  
67 -Commend and support post-secondary efforts  
68 such as WWAMI (a consortium made up of the  
69 states of Wyoming, Washington, Alaska,  
70 Montana and Idaho) and WICHE (Western  
71 Interstate Commission for Higher Education),  
72 both of which offer educational opportunities,  
73 particularly in professional programs, not  
74 available in Montana.

75  
76 -Reinforce methods to make school personnel  
77 aware of quality educational and resource  
78 materials on cooperative businesses and  
79 philosophy. (1990)

80  
81 -Compile and keep current a list of local and  
82 regional scholarships available at Montana's  
83 schools and colleges for students in agriculture.  
84 (1990)

85  
86 -Recognizing the value of Ag Education and  
87 specifically the FFA and 4-H programs, we urge  
88 the state legislature to provide the support  
89 necessary to strengthen and continue these  
90 programs.

91  
92 -Urge continued support for the 6-mill levy,  
93 supporting the University system of Montana.

### 94 95 **FARM AGRICULTURAL CREDIT**

96 -Urge strenuous support and adequate funding  
97 for the Farm Credit Service incorporating long-  
98 range, low interest, cooperative policies as the  
99 structure was originally designed. (1990)

100  
101 -Call for continued protection of borrower  
102 stock.

1 -Urge a guarantee of borrower's rights a method  
2 of restructuring of borrower debts and the right  
3 of first refusal.

4  
5 -Support a secondary market for agricultural  
6 loans including real estate.

7  
8 -Support an effort to meet beginning farmer's  
9 credit needs and those whose credit needs  
10 cannot be met by commercial lenders.

11  
12 -Urge utilization of applicable Farm Credit  
13 guidelines in Rural Economic Community  
14 Development (RECD) programs.

## 15 16 **ENERGY**

17 -Oppose the privatization of the Federal Power  
18 Administration and the government-owned  
19 transmission and power generation facilities at  
20 federal dams.

21  
22 -Support state and federal programs to reduce  
23 our dependence on fossil fuels through the  
24 development of alternative sources such as  
25 biofuels, geothermal, solar and wind energy  
26 technologies among others to provide affordable  
27 energy. (2021)

28  
29 -Support a phased transition from fossil fuel  
30 extraction and use to developing other energy  
31 sources that fairly compensates impacted farms,  
32 ranches, and communities. (2023)

33  
34 -Urge the use of biofuels as sources for strategic,  
35 transportation and heating fuels. (2005 & 2010  
36 & 2021)

37  
38 -Promote the establishment and construction of  
39 domestic biofuel plants and associated  
40 processing facilities (2021 & 2022).

41  
42 -Support the retention of RFS, and oppose the  
43 changing of the statute, without information  
44 based on the best possible science, and approval  
45 by public review.

46  
47 -Encourage the EPA to add additional  
48 feedstocks for renewable diesel and jet fuel, and

49 research other oilseeds as biofuel feedstock.  
50 (2023)

51  
52 -Encourage education on issues involved with  
53 renewable energy, including right of way,  
54 leasing and property rights with takings  
55 affecting landowners. (2009)

56  
57 -Safety precautions and landowner protections  
58 need to be a high priority in impact statement  
59 reviews for pipeline development to ensure  
60 protection of Montana farms, ranches, land, air  
61 and water from adverse impacts. (2012&2021)

62  
63 -Support the requirement to purchase double  
64 current state standards (15%) of renewable  
65 energy credits and the electricity output from  
66 community renewable energy projects.(2010)

67  
68 -Support legislation and initiatives to obtain  
69 **75%** of energy from renewable resources by  
70 **2030**. (2016)

71  
72 -The increase in generating capacity created by  
73 new hydro-electric generation projects in  
74 existing facilities that come on-line should be  
75 classified as renewable energy. (2012)

76  
77 -Require new non-utility merchant transmission  
78 lines and pipelines set aside 3% annual gross  
79 revenues to be paid annually to landowners  
80 upon whom the transmission lines and pipelines  
81 are built in place of the current practice of one-  
82 time easement payments. (2009)

83  
84 -We encourage electric co-ops throughout the  
85 nation, to build and acquire the **renewable**  
86 **generation** and transmission resources  
87 necessary to ensure the same balance of cost-  
88 based power. (2003)

89  
90 -Support the establishment of publicly-owned  
91 energy utilities. (2023)

## 92 93 **NET METERING**

94 -Montana Farmers Union calls upon the  
95 Montana Legislature to enact legislation to



1 expand the benefits of net metering by raising  
2 the current cap of 50KW, allow multiple meters  
3 for effective use of wind/solar systems on  
4 farmsteads and for community net metering and  
5 finally to let renewable energy generators to  
6 bank excess energy as credit beyond 12 months  
7 for future credit. (2014)

8

9 **AGRITOURISM**

10 -Support the expansion of both income-  
11 generating and educational agritourism  
12 opportunities for Montana producers and their  
13 products. (2017)

14

15 -Support a state program providing reliable  
16 information about liability and safety issues  
17 surrounding agritourism. (2023)

18

19 **-We support agritourism as it relates to the  
20 values of communities and their needs,  
21 including cooperatives, and education as it  
22 relates to local foods, resource stewardship,  
23 field work, and plant cultivation. (2024)**

24

25 **-We support grant programs that fairly  
26 distribute general fund dollars back to family  
27 farms and producers, including beginning  
28 farmers and ranchers, participating in  
29 agritourism. (2024)**

30

31 **-We support grant programs and research  
32 that focus on sustainable agritourism. (2024)**

33

34 **-We support furthering the definition of  
35 agritourism, as it relates to liability and  
36 accompanying signage be made available for  
37 those participating in agritourism. (2024)**

38

39 **-We support access to affordable and  
40 comprehensive liability and property  
41 insurance for agritourism. (2024)**

42

43 **LAND USE**

44 -We believe agriculture is the highest and best  
45 use of arable lands for society as a whole, yet  
46 such lands are increasingly being lost to urban  
47 sprawl or development for other uses.

48 Therefore, we urge local, state and federal  
49 governments to take appropriate actions to  
50 protect suitable farmlands **and rangelands** from  
51 development for non-agricultural uses. (2023)

52

53 -Request that trespassers be held liable for any  
54 damage done to private property along public  
55 access streams.

56

57 -Support public and private partnerships that  
58 address access by Montana citizens to federal  
59 and state lands. (2020)

60

61 -We discourage new mineral extraction until  
62 EIS's are completed. We encourage the  
63 Montana legislature to fund the DEQ  
64 sufficiently to comply with current law. (2014)

65 -Support state-of-the-art reclamation of all lands  
66 involved in extractive industries.

67

68 -Urge the State of Montana and all other  
69 governmental agencies to adopt measures,  
70 which require the least possible interference  
71 with agricultural production during extraction of  
72 minerals.

73

74 -Reclamation, including weed control, should  
75 be the responsibility of the land developer.  
76 (2021)

77

78 -The land developer must have a noxious weed  
79 control plan approved by the local weed board.  
80 (2021)

81

82 -Areas of land in Montana that are identified as  
83 Wilderness Study Areas should have a date of  
84 completion. (2014)

85

86 -Oppose any agency or individual entering into  
87 a mineral lease or granting a permit for the  
88 extraction of minerals without the consent of the  
89 land surface owner, with just compensation to  
90 the agricultural operation.

91

92 -Mineral estate has dominance over surface  
93 owners by law. Surface owners should be

1 compensated for damages to property.  
2 Compensation should be paid for well sites,  
3 easements and other facilities that are brought in  
4 and used by the industry. (2005)

5  
6 -Support the ban on cyanide heap leach in  
7 mining. (2011)

8  
9 -Urge a more transparent and thorough  
10 permitting process for Class II Oil and Gas Solid  
11 Waste Disposal Sites that will include a  
12 mandatory Environmental Impact Study (EIS).  
13 Support the strengthening of Montana’s Class II  
14 Solid Waste Disposal Sites laws to match or  
15 exceed North Dakota statutes to protect  
16 Montanan’s land and resources. (2013)

17  
18 **-Support production of sustainable fuels**  
19 **when wastewater is treated to at least**  
20 **irrigation water quality standards on site.**  
21 **(2024)**

22  
23 -Support safety precautions and landowner  
24 protection in impact statement reviews for oil  
25 and gas wells to ensure protection of Montana  
26 farms, ranches, land, air and water from adverse  
27 impacts. (2013)

28  
29 -Oppose any transfer of public land to private  
30 entities which would adversely impact  
31 agriculture. (2015)

32  
33 -Support a farmland **and rangeland** protection  
34 policy to encourage the continuation of farming  
35 **and ranching** versus urban development.  
36 (2022)

37  
38 -We call for conflicts between land uses and the  
39 need for environmental protections to be  
40 resolved through some combination of  
41 cooperative use agreements, technical and/or  
42 financial assistance and collaborative long-  
43 range planning. (2023)

44  
45 -We support voluntary government programs,  
46 initiatives and proposals that offer financial

47 incentives to private landowners for keeping  
48 farm and ranch lands intact while not limiting or  
49 restricting agricultural practices or livestock  
50 management or requiring that private property  
51 be open to public access. (2023)

52  
53 **ENVIRONMENT**

54 -Support continued disclosure of potential  
55 impacts and public participation under the  
56 Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)  
57 regarding impacts to agriculture lands and  
58 producers from proposals that may cause harm  
59 to agricultural operations. (2023)

60  
61 **-Support the rights of future generations of**  
62 **Montanans to have a clean and healthy**  
63 **environment. (2024)**

64  
65 -Support feasible air, water, and land use  
66 standards to prevent degradation of our  
67 environment and quality of life for present and  
68 future generations.

69  
70 -Support measures to mitigate impacts from  
71 extreme weather or disaster events. (2023)

72  
73 -Support establishing numeric standards  
74 regarding coal bed methane production to  
75 protect our water, soils, and crops. (2022)

76  
77 -When clean water standards for drinking  
78 cannot be achieved then water should be treated  
79 to standards acceptable for irrigation use. (2022)

80  
81 -Large corporate concentrated animal feeding  
82 operations (CAFO) must be required to operate  
83 in a manner least damaging to the environment.  
84 (2022)

85  
86 -Support an adequate review, prior to the start of  
87 each coal bed methane development, to identify  
88 and propose mitigation measures to ensure that  
89 the proposal will not:

- 90 1) Cause qualitative or quantitative problems  
91 to off-site water resources  
92 2) Alter vegetative characteristics

1 3) Cause subsidence; or  
2 4) Negatively affects the land in other ways.  
3 (2000)  
4  
5 -Require any company that wants to conduct  
6 hydraulic fracturing in Montana to publicly  
7 disclose all chemicals to be used. (2011)  
8  
9 -Support legislation that requires coal bed  
10 methane producers to recharge aquifers with the  
11 maximum amount of water practicable. (2010)  
12  
13 -Support classification of coal bed methane  
14 water as ground water and ensuring senior water  
15 rights holders, not developing companies, will  
16 hold these water rights. (2009)  
17  
18 -Continue climate change monitoring and  
19 research to provide agricultural producers with  
20 the knowledge and ability to adapt to climate  
21 change, and to reduce their environmental  
22 impact. (2014)  
23  
24 -Any climate solution should address fair and  
25 equitable compensation for all agricultural  
26 producers to sequester carbon and reduce  
27 greenhouse gases as well as development of  
28 alternative energy resources. (2022)  
29  
30 -Ensure integrity of private carbon markets and  
31 other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas  
32 emissions and make sure that agriculture plays a  
33 key role in these initiatives. (2022)  
34  
35 -Support immediate development of safe  
36 methods of disposal of nuclear waste in the state  
37 of origin.  
38  
39 -Request that educational programs be  
40 conducted and corrective measures taken to  
41 control saline seep.  
42  
43 -Support first priority for water used in  
44 domestic, municipal and agricultural  
45 consumption.  
46

47 -Urge feasible legislation and educational  
48 programs, which will assist in protecting ground  
49 water from pollution and depletion beyond  
50 natural recharge.  
51  
52 -Support out-of-state garbage bans to give the  
53 state time to properly regulate large-scale  
54 landfills.  
55  
56 -Recommend that prior to oil and gas drilling on  
57 any agricultural property, the company should  
58 provide an independent well and surface testing  
59 for water quality and quantity base line. (2012)  
60  
61 -Support the expansion of the pesticide  
62 container recycling program through increased  
63 drop-off locations and times. (2016)  
64  
65 -Oppose the disposal of hazardous waste by  
66 mixing it with fertilizer, and other farm  
67 products, which is unacceptable and a  
68 dangerous practice that threatens the  
69 environment and human health.  
70  
71 -MFU should be instrumental in bringing  
72 together agriculture organizations,  
73 environmental and industry groups to examine  
74 the latest national fertilizer standards and their  
75 relevance to Montana. (1999)  
76  
77 -Support statewide recycling. (2015)  
78  
79 -Support replacement of non-renewable  
80 materials with renewable materials. (2015)  
81  
82 -Support a farmer educational program to assist  
83 **access to and development of** renewable  
84 packaging, marketing, and production. (2015)  
85  
86 **FOREST AND RANGELAND**  
87 **STEWARSHIP**  
88 -Seek expanded technical assistance for  
89 landowners of small timber tracts.  
90  
91 -Call for state license and bonding of all log and  
92 timber scalers.  
93  
94 -Urge that timber and log purchases and sales be  
95 based on total cubic content.  
96

1 -Recommend that control of National Forests  
2 should remain with the United States  
3 Department of Agriculture.  
4  
5 -Urge that State and Federal Forest Services  
6 expand their small sales program to make timber  
7 available and provide continual employment for  
8 small independent operations.  
9  
10 -Urge that state and federal forest policies  
11 include the recognition of the importance of  
12 permitted grazing and biomass production.  
13 Increased funding should be provided for  
14 salvaging dead trees and fuels reduction. (2011  
15 & 2014)  
16  
17 **-We support ‘Good Neighbor Authorities’  
18 and other state and federal policies that  
19 reduce regulatory obstacles to collaborative  
20 management and stewardship of forests  
21 rangeland. (2024)**  
22  
23 -Oppose “let it burn” policies. (2002)  
24  
25 -Support practical grazing practices on public  
26 land that supports good stewardship.  
27  
28 -Vacant grazing allotments on public land  
29 should be made immediately available to  
30 Montana livestock producers affected by  
31 drought or other natural disaster. (2020).  
32  
33 **WATER**  
34 -The use of water storage through impoundment  
35 structures, conservation measures, USDA Small  
36 Watershed Program, and implementation of soil  
37 health principles as primary means for water  
38 development. (2023)  
39  
40 -Support a broad water- development policy,  
41 which insures multiple uses, recognizing the  
42 primacy of the needs of agriculture.  
43  
44 -Support state's right to adjudicate all waters  
45 within its borders.  
46  
47 -Support State Water Court adjudication of all  
48 state water disputes, including all federal, state  
49 and private permits and/or reservations.  
50  
51 -Any time a water source used by agricultural  
52 and rural communities is contaminated, all  
53 remediation expenses should be levied against

54 the responsible party, and work should be  
55 completed in an expeditious manner. (2023)  
56  
57 -Oppose the levying of any additional fees on  
58 any water rights that the claimants have already  
59 paid an assessment for water rights adjudication.  
60 (2004)  
61  
62 -Include agricultural representatives on river  
63 basin councils. (2017)  
64  
65 -Oppose the drilling of exempt wells that affect  
66 existing water users. (2017)  
67  
68 -Oppose legislation, administrative rules, and  
69 reservation processes that give control of our  
70 waterways to the Department of Fish, Wildlife  
71 and Parks, Corps of Engineers or the  
72 Environmental Protection Agency.  
73  
74 -Oppose broadening the definition of what  
75 waters are covered under the Clean Water Act  
76 that may unduly burden family farmers and  
77 ranchers. (2021)  
78  
79 -Oppose the broadening of the federal  
80 government’s jurisdiction over a group of  
81 waters simply because the bodies of water are  
82 near each other. (2021)  
83  
84 -Oppose legislation, which allows federal  
85 reservation of wilderness water rights.  
86  
87 -Oppose removal of dams on the Snake and  
88 Columbia River systems. (1999)  
89  
90 -Oppose amendments to the Clean Water Act  
91 that pertain to non-point source pollution, which  
92 adversely affects family farms. (1992 & 2022)  
93  
94 -Recognize that a degradation of water occurs  
95 through natural means and request that such  
96 degradation be taken into consideration when  
97 monitoring for non-point source pollution.  
98  
99 -Urge a water development program to include  
100 the construction and rehabilitation of multiple  
101 use water storage facilities and delivery  
102 systems.  
103

1 -Support the Montana Water Rights Compact  
2 Commission, to continue and expedite the  
3 adjudication of all federal water rights and all  
4 water rights held in trust for the Indian tribes by  
5 compact. Encourage public programs to provide  
6 sufficient funding to bring this to a conclusion.

7  
8 **-We support ensuring adequately staffed,  
9 maintained, and operated irrigation projects.  
10 While continuing to expedite the  
11 adjudication of water rights, we should also  
12 support effectively managed facilities and  
13 programs. (2024)**

14  
15 -Support a joint effort between the State of  
16 Montana and federal lending agencies to supply  
17 long-term low interest loans for agricultural  
18 development of water that has been reserved for  
19 agricultural purposes and irrigation and  
20 encourage the agricultural interests to take  
21 advantage of this and develop the water that has  
22 been reserved, before losing it to downstream  
23 states.

24  
25 -We urge oil and gas companies to properly treat  
26 and reuse their wastewater. (2013)

27  
28 **-We only support wastewater injection that  
29 has been treated to at least the minimum  
30 standards for irrigation water. (2024)**

31  
32 **-Object to EPA or DEQ from exempting  
33 entire aquifers for wastewater injection or  
34 disposal. (2024)**

### 35 **WILDLIFE**

36  
37 -Urge support of wildlife management to  
38 maintain a brucellosis-free state.

39  
40 -Bison and bison management throughout the  
41 entire state of Montana, especially the Greater  
42 Yellowstone Area, remains a concern to  
43 Montana livestock producers.

44  
45 -Effective bison **and elk** management is an  
46 important component of the prevention of the  
47 spread of brucellosis and to the protection of

48 private property. Prevention of brucellosis is in  
49 the interest of public health and safety.

50  
51 -Private property rights of all landowners must  
52 be protected within any bison management plan.  
53 Free roaming, feral and wild bison should not be  
54 allowed within the state of Montana and all  
55 bison should be regulated as livestock by the  
56 Montana Department of Livestock. (2012)

57  
58 -Support adjustments in Federal and State  
59 grazing fees according to quality of grazing  
60 units.

61  
62 -The National Park Service shall eliminate  
63 brucellosis from its wildlife within Yellowstone  
64 National Park. It shall maintain its bison **and elk**  
65 herds and range health. (2008)

66  
67 -Support private property and land lessees'  
68 rights in regard to wildlife management (2021).

69  
70 -Urge a portion of big game hunting and fishing  
71 license fees be earmarked for county road  
72 maintenance.

73  
74 -Support state management plan for grizzly  
75 bears **and wolves** created in collaboration with  
76 family farmers and ranchers. (2019)

77  
78 -Oppose any legislation banning aerial hunting,  
79 steel traps, M44's and other approved methods  
80 for control of wildlife-incurred damage.

81  
82 -Oppose placing the prairie dog on the  
83 endangered species list. (2002)

84  
85 -Urge provisions for working with the  
86 landowner on habitat restoration, which benefits  
87 both the landowner and the endangered species.  
88 (2003)

89  
90 -Oppose taking coyote and fox off the predator  
91 list through reclassification as furbearers.

92

1 -We support the judicious use of control  
2 practices being continued on federal and state  
3 lands to control coyotes, feral hogs, rabid skunk  
4 populations, burrowing rodents and other  
5 damaging species. (2014)

6  
7 -We recognize concerns of the impacts on  
8 agricultural lands with the potential listing of  
9 endangered species. (2014)

10  
11 -Allow ranchers and the public to protect private  
12 property from predators that fall under the  
13 Endangered Species Act. (2010)

14  
15 -The Department of Interior U.S. Fish and  
16 Wildlife Service is responsible for the  
17 management of wildlife while under the ESA  
18 and is responsible for reimbursement of  
19 livestock losses caused by said wildlife. (2010)

20  
21 -Urge adequate support for wildlife predator  
22 control including protected species. (2013)

23  
24 -We support funding for the livestock loss  
25 program. (2018)

## 26 27 **PUBLIC UTILITIES**

28 -Urge continued support of policies granting  
29 preference to publicly owned power systems  
30 and rural electric cooperatives.

31  
32 -Support wholeheartedly the financing and  
33 continuation of our Rural Electric Cooperatives  
34 and Rural Telephone Associations.

35  
36 -Support legislation enacting, upon adequate  
37 research, a National Power Grid linking all  
38 power planning agencies, including any new  
39 sources of power development.

40  
41 -Urge that authority of any grid system should  
42 never supersede or circumvent Montana Laws  
43 on facility siting rate structure, pollution or  
44 reclamation.

45

46 -Favor expanding the universal service fund for  
47 both landline and cellular at a reasonable cost.  
48 (2013 & 2021)

49  
50 -Favor universal telephone service at reasonable  
51 cost.

52  
53 -Rural telephone and electric coops should be  
54 exempt from paying fees for right of way on  
55 state and federal lands. (1999)

56  
57 -Urge continuation of district-based elections  
58 for the Montana Public Service Commission.

59  
60 -We oppose any efforts to regulate our rural  
61 electric cooperatives and rural telephone  
62 cooperatives by the Public Service Commission.  
63 (2012)

64  
65 -Oppose wireless broadband networks that  
66 interfere with GPS operations. (2011)

67  
68 -Support net neutrality. (2014)

69  
70 -Support broadband development to increase  
71 access to high-speed internet in rural Montana.  
72 (2015)

73  
74 -Support disclosure of public utilities executive  
75 salaries. (2013)

76  
77 -Support Renewable Energy programs and  
78 projects. (2020)

79  
80 **-Encourage rural electric coops to support**  
81 **installation of distributed renewable systems**  
82 **and give preference to power purchases from**  
83 **their members vs. large-scale energy systems.**  
84 **(2024)**

## 85 86 **FOOD AND FOOD SAFETY**

87 -Food safety policies can and should protect  
88 consumers without limiting farmers, ranchers  
89 and small food processors who sell into local  
90 and regional markets. (2009)

91  
92 -USDA and FDA should deliver educational  
93 programs to assist in understanding and meeting  
94 FSMA requirements. (2017)

95

1 -Urge closer control of additives, non-food  
2 substitutes and fillers, in foods, which lessen  
3 nutritional value.

4  
5 -Food and off farm sales must be protected from  
6 excessive government regulations. (2009)

7  
8 -Support funding of the Montana Food and  
9 Agricultural Development Centers. (2009)

10  
11 -Support the development of local and regional  
12 food systems and infrastructure that shorten the  
13 distance between the farm and table. (2009 and  
14 2011)

15  
16 -Supports Department of Agriculture, DPHHS  
17 and Livestock creating and monitoring  
18 standardized state programs for food safety at  
19 farmers' markets and within the "cottage" food  
20 industry. (2013)

21  
22 -Products entering the U.S. must be produced  
23 and processed under the same sanitary and  
24 phytosanitary restrictions as those imposed on  
25 American family farmers and clearly labeled  
26 with country of origin (2021).

27  
28 **-Support banning production, sale and**  
29 **import of lab grown meat, lab created fish,**  
30 **and synthetic milk to protect our food**  
31 **culture, farmers, and public health. (2024)**

### 32 33 **TRUTH IN LABELING**

#### 34 **Imitation of Meat:**

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 **-Require products containing protein**  
43 **derived from insects must be labeled. (2024)**

44  
45 **-Support that foods be labeled as bio-**  
46 **engineered or contain bio-engineered**  
47 **ingredients based on the National**  
48 **Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard.**  
49 **(2024)**

50

### 51 **PUBLIC POLICY**

52 -We recognize that there are many ethical,  
53 moral, economic, and societal issues which are  
54 important to us as citizens, but don't relate  
55 directly to our organizational purpose. In these  
56 areas we encourage our members to utilize,  
57 where applicable, this public philosophy when  
58 participating in the formulation of such public  
59 policy, whether individually or as a part of other  
60 groups dedicated to responsible investigation  
61 and solutions to these issues. But where public  
62 policy involves us as rural citizens and as  
63 Farmers Union members, we accept our  
64 responsibility to speak to these issues whether in  
65 the global arena, on the national scene, or in our  
66 state, cities and rural communities.

67  
68 -The United States enjoys the safest, highest  
69 quality, and most economical food supply in the  
70 world. We request our state and national  
71 organizations insist that government maintain  
72 the high inspection standards for foreign  
73 vegetables, meats and food products, which  
74 apply to U.S. producers.

75  
76 -We encourage **consumers, businesses, state**  
77 **and federal agencies,** to buy locally sourced or  
78 produced products. (2013)

79  
80 -The strength of the United States is rooted in  
81 self-sufficiency in natural resources,  
82 particularly food, **energy and fiber** production.  
83 **These are essential to national security.** We  
84 must not become dependent on imported food,  
85 **energy, or fiber** which would **increase our**  
86 **vulnerability** to threats.

87  
88 -Federal spending priorities must not  
89 shortchange our domestic family farm  
90 agriculture.

91  
92 -International trade agreements must not include  
93 language that allows multinational corporations  
94 relief from domestic legislation holding them  
95 responsible in areas regarding the environment,  
96 labor standards, sustainable family farm and  
97 ranch protection, privacy issues, and control

1 over misinformation, hateful and violent  
2 communication via social media and all other  
3 applications. (2022)

4  
5 -Negotiations on trade agreements must be  
6 transparent and accessible to agricultural, labor,  
7 and environmental organizations in a manner  
8 equal to or greater than participation by large  
9 multinational corporations and any other  
10 impacted entities. (2022)

11  
12 -Encourage removing term limits for public  
13 office of Montana office holders.

14  
15 -Support universal rates, rules, and regulations  
16 on federal land leases.

17 -Support further multi-lateral trade negotiations  
18 involving agricultural products provided the  
19 following concerns are satisfied before  
20 negotiations enter the final phase:

- 21 • Global trade should not drain the wealth  
22 of one country for the benefit of others.  
23 (2003)
- 24 • Oppose the outsourcing of State and  
25 Federal Government jobs. (2004)
- 26 • There must be a mechanism in place to  
27 mitigate the adverse effects of currency  
28 exchange rate fluctuations.
- 29 • The sovereignty of the USA and its  
30 states to govern within their borders  
31 must not be diluted or internationalized  
32 at all.
- 33 • We demand a transparent democratic  
34 process in trade negotiations and oppose  
35 the abdication of Congressional  
36 responsibility by granting fast track in  
37 the approval of any trade agreement.  
38 (2013)
- 39 • Oppose currency manipulation  
40 regarding trade. (2015)

41  
42 -Oppose misuse of eminent domain laws by  
43 private companies and government. Any person  
44 or entity should not be allowed to install another  
45 system on the taken property unless the owners  
46 of each parcel of the condemned property

47 consent and are compensated in an amount  
48 negotiated by the owner. The person who lost  
49 possession of the land through eminent domain  
50 should be released from liability for any  
51 damage. (1999)

52  
53 **-We support National Security. We**  
54 **appreciate the importance of the mission at**  
55 **Malmstrom Airforce Base and the Montana**  
56 **Air National Guard.**

57 **We oppose the objection by the military to**  
58 **installations of communication towers,**  
59 **windmills, solar panels or other privately**  
60 **funded projects on private property without**  
61 **fair compensation to the landowner. (2024)**  
62

63 -We support efforts to reform eminent domain  
64 law. It must include liability of developers for  
65 damage to the land. There must be clear  
66 evidence that the project will serve Montana's  
67 public interest, enforcement of a mitigation  
68 plan, and a just compensation for damages.  
69 Landowners and tenants should both be  
70 involved in the process of granting the  
71 easement. (2012)

72  
73 -Landowners should also have the option of  
74 leasing, rather than deeding the land  
75 condemned, with appropriate safeguards for the  
76 landowner should the land be eventually  
77 returned. (2000)

78  
79 -Support reform to Montana's eminent domain  
80 laws related to just compensation that provides  
81 the landowner with the option to receive  
82 payment for their condemned property as an  
83 annual rental payment or as a one-time lump  
84 sum payment. (2012)

85  
86 -Oppose expanding trends to massive land  
87 holdings in America by foreign individuals and  
88 corporations and foreign and domestic non-  
89 profits.

90  
91 -Support review of land purchased by foreign  
92 individuals and urge legislation to form policy  
93 to limit land purchased by out-of-state foreign  
94 individuals or organizations. (2010)

95



1 -Eliminate foreign ownership of large food  
2 processing entities. (2020)

3  
4 -Encourage the Federal Trade Commission  
5 (FTC) and DOJ to investigate agriculture  
6 industry corporate mergers for violations under  
7 anti-monopolization and pro-competition laws.  
8 (2017)

9  
10 -Support volunteer fire departments and EMT's.  
11 (2019)

12  
13 -Support state, local, **and tribal** involvement in  
14 the creation of any national monument **or other**  
15 **federal designations.** (2023)

16  
17 -Support and protect the US Antiquities Act of  
18 1906. (2011)

19  
20 **-We support legislation to reverse the**  
21 **Supreme Court's ruling that overturned the**  
22 **Chevron Deference Doctrine. Agencies,**  
23 **scientists, and experts should create rules to**  
24 **carry out goals established through law by**  
25 **Congress. Judges do not have expertise for**  
26 **establishing these rules and are not granted**  
27 **this power by the Constitution. (2024)**

## 28 29 **DATA OWNERSHIP & ACQUISITION**

30 -All data collected on an agricultural operation  
31 is the exclusive property of the operation and its  
32 management. (2015)

33  
34 -Storage and use of **such** data should be strictly  
35 prohibited without the well-defined legal  
36 consent of individuals. (2015)

37  
38 **-MFU believes aggregated agricultural data**  
39 **being harvested from producers should be**  
40 **made immediately and publicly available to**  
41 **avoid market manipulation. (2024)**

42  
43 **-Oppose businesses profiting from the**  
44 **collection or sale of personal and aggregated**  
45 **data. (2024)**

46  
47 **-Support a "do not collect" provision**  
48 **regarding data collection and storage. (2024)**

49 -Farmers should have the right to opt out of data  
50 harvest, and all harvested data should have strict  
51 oversight. (2022)

52  
53 -Oppose the use of drones for unauthorized  
54 surveillance of agricultural operations and  
55 invasion of personal privacy. (2013)

## 56 57 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

58 -Urge federal and state government to expand,  
59 invest, and improve the instate investment and  
60 loan programs.

61  
62 -Urge federal and state government to invest in  
63 infrastructure needed for rural communities to  
64 meet their economic opportunities.

65  
66 -Continue to support federal and statewide  
67 efforts by regional economic development  
68 programs that benefit agriculture such as the  
69 Food and Agriculture Development Centers and  
70 the Montana Cooperative Development Center.

71  
72 -Encourage federal and state government to help  
73 fund the startup or continuation of local food  
74 processors. (2020)

75  
76 **-We support grant programs that fairly**  
77 **distribute general fund dollars back to rural**  
78 **communities for locally owned small business**  
79 **and local development and preservation.**  
80 **(2024)**

## 81 82 **TAXATION**

83 - Support the concept that taxes are levied to  
84 provide services people cannot provide  
85 efficiently for themselves based on the  
86 following principles: (1990)

- 87 • Property taxes are a stable source of  
88 revenue and should be based on  
89 equitable appraisal. (1990)
- 90 • Income taxes based on ability to pay are  
91 the fairest method to generate revenue.  
92 (1990)
- 93 • Taxes on business should not be  
94 restrictive, but appropriate to their use of  
95 public services. (1990)

1 -Support rebalancing the tax burden between  
2 corporate, small business, residential and  
3 agricultural taxpayers. (2023)  
4  
5 **-We support ongoing research regarding**  
6 **taxation laws and distribution back into**  
7 **rural communities and family farms. (2024)**  
8  
9 -Oppose any effort to limit the right of states to  
10 tax their natural resources.  
11  
12 -Agricultural "inventories" should not be taxed  
13 if business inventories are exempt from  
14 taxation.  
15  
16 -Support Rural Micro Business Tax Credit  
17 values that are inflation-adjusted. (2010)  
18  
19 -Request development of methods requiring  
20 absentee mineral interest owners to share the tax  
21 burden now borne solely by the surface owner.  
22  
23 -Encourage tax exemptions for energy saving  
24 devices.  
25  
26 -Oppose any general sales or value added tax at  
27 either the state or federal level  
28  
29 -Urge the Montana legislature to remove all tax  
30 advantages that are intended for agriculture,  
31 from being utilized by non-agricultural  
32 operations. (2023)  
33  
34 -Support a fair and equitable timber tax.  
35  
36 -Support fair and equitable taxation of  
37 marijuana.  
38  
39 -Encourage increases in marijuana and tobacco  
40 taxes for uses that would benefit the public  
41 good. (2020)  
42  
43 **-Urge the creation of an oversight agency that**  
44 **collects and reports data on the effectiveness**  
45 **of opportunity zones that “benefit” rural**  
46 **communities. (2024)**  
47  
48 **-Support accountability standards for**  
49 **opportunity zone projects. (2024)**  
50  
51 Support incentives for Montana businesses that  
52 buy local, fresh, and seasonably available prod  
53 ucts.  
54

55 **Fair Market Value**  
56 -Support fair and equitable valuations for all  
57 agricultural operations.  
58  
59 -Support a land classification system, which  
60 assures uniform and equitable assessed values,  
61 which must be straightforward and easy for  
62 taxpayers to understand.  
63  
64 -Classification should be based on productive  
65 capacity of the different soil types, based on  
66 sound science and taking into consideration the  
67 influence of climate on agricultural production.  
68  
69  
70 -We support property tax reform to more  
71 adequately reflect land use. We seek to have  
72 material participation as the basis for  
73 classification as agricultural production land.  
74 (2018)  
75  
76 -Expand the tax credit to include leasing land to  
77 beginning farmers. (2014)  
78  
79 -Ask that property owners be granted the lowest  
80 land classification on all private land used for  
81 public roads and stream beds which are required  
82 to be open for public use.  
83  
84 -Support a continual review of all tax-exempt  
85 property.  
86  
87 **Estate**  
88 -We support estate tax relief for family-owned  
89 farms, ranches and small businesses in order to  
90 facilitate the transfer of those enterprises to the  
91 next generation. We also recommend:  
92 1) Opposing any reductions to any federal  
93 estate tax exemptions. (2016)  
94 2) Simplify the exemption qualification  
95 rules and requirements;  
96 3) Implement graduated rates, and;  
97 4) Retain **reasonable** Ag exemptions.  
98 (2005)  
99  
100  
101

1 -Encourage that inheritance taxes on  
2 agricultural land be eliminated if land is passed  
3 to heirs and remains in agricultural use, operated  
4 by them, for at least 5 years.

5

6 **-Support tax incentives for agricultural**  
7 **estates that transfer at a reduced market**  
8 **value to young or beginning producers.**  
9 **(2024)**

10

11 -Support estate transfers at fair market value.  
12 (2017)

13

14 -Support a reasonable federal gift tax credit to  
15 children of farm families in recognition of their  
16 contribution to the business when the farm is  
17 incorporated and stock is distributed.

18

19 -Oppose the repeal of agriculture homestead  
20 exemption. (2018)

21

### 22 **Utilities**

23 -Support the Montana Electric Cooperatives'  
24 Association in its efforts to retain the existing  
25 property tax rates on electric transmission and  
26 distribution facilities. We oppose imposition of  
27 an excise or sales tax on electric utility  
28 customers.

29

30 -Call on the State of Montana to require  
31 investor-owned utilities and corporations to pay  
32 taxes on the declared value of the property,  
33 which is then used for the purpose of  
34 ratemaking.

35

### 36 **Transportation**

37 -Oppose any increase in the Farm Gross Vehicle  
38 Weight tax.

39

40 -Urge that full, realistic and accurate values be  
41 used for taxing railroads operating property in  
42 the State of Montana.

43

44 -Oppose suspension of the fuel tax due to the  
45 fact that fuel taxes generated are being spent to  
46 match Federal highway monies that create good

47 paying jobs and a healthy highway construction  
48 program in Montana. (2005)

49

50 -Oppose any effort to increase motor fuel taxes  
51 and divert the revenue into the general fund at  
52 either the state or national level.

53

### 54 **Worker's Compensation**

55 -Urge continued efforts to improve the operation  
56 of the Workman's Compensation program,  
57 including closing "fraud loopholes".

58

59 -Support a single classification for all  
60 agricultural operations within Montana for  
61 Worker's Compensation. (2015)

62

63 -Oppose the privatization of the Montana State  
64 Fund. (2021)

65

### 66 **MEDICAL CARE**

67 -Support increased telehealth and telemedicine  
68 access. (2023)

69

70 -Support 100% deductions for health insurance  
71 premiums of the self-employed and retired.  
72 (1994)

73

74 -Urge a cooperative effort between all health  
75 care and educational agencies to seek a solution  
76 to the critical shortages of health care personnel,  
77 particularly in our rural health care facilities.  
78 (1991)

79

80 -Urge cost containment be an element in any  
81 health care plan.

82

83 -Urge the Congress of the United States to enact  
84 comprehensive health care reform that provides  
85 all American citizens an affordable public  
86 option. (2009)

87

88 -Increase access to and oppose cuts in health  
89 care benefits and all premium rate increases to  
90 all Medicare and Medicaid recipients and  
91 veterans. (2023)

92

1 -Urge recruitment of primary care physicians to  
2 rural Montana communities. (2013)  
3  
4 -Increase support for rural emergency medical  
5 services. (2023)  
6  
7 -Urge increased support of and access to home  
8 health care for rural Montanans. (2013)  
9  
10 -Increase support for critical access hospitals,  
11 rural health clinics and assisted living facilities.  
12 (2023)  
13  
14 -Support increased funding for home health,  
15 emergency medicine, increased use of  
16 telemedicine, population health and care  
17 coordination for our rural communities. (2023)  
18  
19 -Support funding for mental health and  
20 substance abuse and addiction resources  
21 especially for rural communities. (2019)  
22  
23 -Support Medicare and Medicaid's ability to  
24 negotiate for lower prescription drug costs.  
25  
26 -Support allowing importation of generic and  
27 name brand prescription drugs from countries  
28 with similar or equal to regulatory oversight as  
29 compared to the United States. (2021)  
30  
31 **-Support funding for research and  
32 implementation of food prescription  
33 interventions. (2024)**  
34  
35 **-Support nutritional interventions and  
36 produce prescriptions to be funded through  
37 health care streams. (2024)**  
38  
39 **-Support federal and state government  
40 funding of programs and facilities for  
41 children and adults with developmental  
42 disabilities. (2024)**  
43  
44  
45  
46

47 **SOCIAL SECURITY**  
48 -Oppose any cuts in either benefits or cost of  
49 living increases for Social Security recipients.  
50 (2021)  
51  
52 -Oppose any changes in the program, which  
53 would raise or move the retirement age.  
54  
55 -Oppose deferral or cutting of payroll taxes,  
56 which would jeopardize the sustainability of  
57 Social Security. (2020)  
58  
59 -Oppose taxing of Social Security benefits by  
60 the state of Montana.  
61  
62 -Support raising the maximum income level  
63 upon which a person is required to pay social  
64 security taxes in order to maintain solvency of  
65 the Social Security System. (1999)  
66  
67 **RURAL SOCIAL ISSUES AND CIVIL  
68 RIGHTS**  
69 **-A strong democracy is foundational for  
70 achieving successful implementation of  
71 policy that MFU members support. (2024)**  
72  
73 **-Success of our democracy requires a judicial  
74 system that upholds our Constitution and our  
75 established law and order system. (2024)**  
76  
77 -Support equality under law for all citizens  
78 regardless of race, age, gender, sexual  
79 orientation, ability and religion. (2014)  
80  
81 -Urge the federal and state government to  
82 continue funding the Experience Works  
83 Program.  
84  
85 -Support and urge recognition of the importance  
86 of Senior Citizen's Centers as a vital function in  
87 our communities.  
88  
89 -Support the continuation of nutrition programs  
90 for people of all ages as well as other beneficial  
91 programs.  
92

1 -The United States Postal Service provides  
2 critical services to Montanans, and we demand  
3 a financially solvent, widespread, reliable and  
4 timely system through:

- 5
- 6 • Retaining existing rural Post Offices.
- 7 • Support reforms to the Postal Service
- 8 that would increase solvency by
- 9 changing the congressional mandate that
- 10 pensions be prepaid in advance
- 11 • Support fair and equitable service fees
- 12 • Insist on current services through offices
- 13 and blue boxes be maintained or
- 14 expanded.
- 15 • Oppose any privatization of the Postal
- 16 Service. (2020)
- 17

18 -Oppose right-to-work legislation.

19

20 -Support an equitable minimum wage. (1990)

21 -Oppose the intimidation and harassment of  
22 federal, state, county, and local officials while  
23 carrying out their appointed duties. (2021)

24

25 -The right to vote is fundamental for our  
26 democracy and must be preserved and  
27 encouraged. (2022)

28

29 **-Our democracy must provide the**  
30 **opportunity for all our citizens to vote and**  
31 **have their vote counted by restoring the full**  
32 **power of the Voting Rights Act. (2024)**

33

34 -Promote voting processes which secures the  
35 ease of access to voting by all citizens, including  
36 but not limited to mail-in ballots, ballot drop  
37 boxes, early voting, convenient access to polling  
38 places, and same day registration. (2022)

39

40 -Oppose the intimidation and/or harassment of  
41 voters, in local, state, and national elections,  
42 while exercising their right to vote. (2022)

43

44 -Oppose undermining the will of the people, as  
45 expressed by the public vote, by state  
46 legislators, and other public officials. (2022)

## 47 **FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND** 48 **REGULATIONS**

49 -Require adequate compensation for land and/or  
50 relocation of facilities condemned under the  
51 Flood Plain Act by the federal government.

52

53 -Urge setting fair and equitable rental fees on  
54 state land, and an accurate evaluation of  
55 production potential based upon land  
56 classification.

57

58 -Urge redefinition of "Public Use" to curb  
59 abuses by questionable "Public Need"  
60 applications.

61

62 -Request a study of the cost of liability  
63 insurance, including both high punitive damage  
64 awards and limitation of awards.

65

66 -Ask that federally funded food programs in  
67 schools and at institutions and military  
68 installations use meat and dairy products  
69 produced and purchased in the United States.

70

71 -Support current child labor regulations for  
72 agriculture. (2011)

73

74 -An exemption for agricultural use for above-  
75 ground petroleum storage of up to 10,000  
76 gallons should be granted by the EPA. (2014)

77

78 -Oppose the transfer of all federal lands to state  
79 and local control. (2014)

80

81 -Support farm equipment owners and operators  
82 having the right and ability to repair their own  
83 equipment. (2016)

84

85 -Oppose Federal requirements to have a locator  
86 service check every spot that a soil sample is to  
87 be taken. (2016)

## 88 **FOREIGN POLICY**

89

90 -Oppose withholding agricultural food products,  
91 exported or imported, at the State Department  
92 level as a tool in foreign policy.

93  
94

1 **-Support eliminating Investor-State Dispute**  
2 **Settlements (ISDS) in existing free trade**  
3 **agreements and bilateral investment treaties.**  
4 **(2024)**

5  
6 **ORGANIZATION POLICY**

7 -We believe in the benefits of a grass roots  
8 organization.

9  
10 -Montana Farmers Union is non-partisan and  
11 does not endorse candidates or provide financial  
12 support; members are encouraged to participate  
13 in the activities of the political party of their  
14 choice.

15  
16 -To be an effective force, members must be  
17 involved in the organization. Such involvement  
18 demands communication and motivational  
19 focus from its leadership in order to accomplish  
20 its goals, to develop the talents of the  
21 membership and to foster feelings of self-worth  
22 as individuals and as a group.

23  
24 -Develop programs to increase interaction of  
25 agricultural and non-agricultural groups with  
26 the purpose of achieving common goals. (2013)

27  
28 **-Support legislation and initiatives that help**  
29 **increase the number of family farms by 25%**  
30 **by 2055. (2024)**

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

34  
35 **National Farmers Union**

36 -Urge the establishment of affiliate member  
37 relationships with like-minded organizations.  
38 Such relationships could enhance lobbying  
39 efforts and government policy preparation.  
40 (2005)

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

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

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

53

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

58  
59 **Montana Farmers Union**

60 -Encourage MFU members to run for office and  
61 to participate in community, state, and national  
62 activities and offices.

63  
64 -Implement the expansion of all facets of  
65 traditional and non-traditional membership,  
66 including associate memberships.

67  
68 -Hold seminars for leadership development.

69  
70 -Encourage coverage of agricultural  
71 information and education in Montana media,  
72 and show appreciation when such coverage  
73 appears.

74  
75 -Provide an arena for dialogue among the  
76 membership and between farm organizations  
77 concerning farm programs.

78  
79 -Continue a positive public relations role with  
80 other organizations, groups and individuals to  
81 further the understanding of agricultural issues.

82  
83 -Keep membership informed as to state and  
84 national legislative and organizational  
85 developments.

86  
87 -Provide non-partisan information on all  
88 candidates for public office together with  
89 judicial candidates and include voting records  
90 on issues pertinent to the Farmers Union and its  
91 policies and programs.

92  
93 -Urge expansion of agricultural coalition to  
94 include all agricultural organizations. (2013)

95  
96 -Support and continue to use social media as a  
97 channel of communication for MFU news and  
98 events. (2012)

99  
100 -Encourage member and youth to use their  
101 talents in the Farmers Union and in civic affairs.

102  
103 -Support creation, expansion, and  
104 communication of and with active locals. (2013  
105 & 2021).

1 **ORGANIZATION EDUCATION POLICY**

2 -An educated, involved membership is the  
3 essential ingredient in the Farmers Union if our  
4 membership participation and governance is to  
5 be effective.

6  
7 -Support organizational education incorporating  
8 Farmers Union philosophy as a source of  
9 renewed commitment and as a means of  
10 organizational development so that our  
11 agricultural vocation and our rural communities  
12 may benefit.

13  
14 -Promote programs designed to assist Montana  
15 Farmers Union members in areas pertinent to  
16 their lives as agriculturists: economics, money  
17 creation, consumer education and the broad  
18 range of problems faced by producers and to  
19 assist improving the system of marketing.

20  
21 -Install a program to educate the public about  
22 the accomplishments of the American family  
23 farmer, including their high-quality productivity  
24 and environmental awareness. The program is  
25 to include how the U.S. farm policy works to  
26 ensure affordable food for the entire nation and  
27 the small part of the Ag budget the farmer  
28 receives.

29  
30 -Promote member attendance at conferences to  
31 educate themselves about the importance of  
32 their involvement in family farming.

33  
34 -Urge continued support of land transfer  
35 programs to connect beginning farmers with  
36 retiring farmers. (1992 & 2021)

37  
38 -Link with other state and national groups to  
39 research and develop farm programs and  
40 policies.

41  
42 -Support the development and use of Arrowpeak  
43 Camp for cooperative, legislative, educational  
44 opportunities and membership use.

45  
46 -Establish short-term and long-term educational  
47 goals for all age groups.

50 **2025 SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS**

51 **Right to Repair**

52 Montana Farmers Union demands the right for  
53 farmers to repair our own equipment.  
54 Equipment manufacturers refuse access or  
55 charge exorbitant prices for technical advisor  
56 software needed to troubleshoot equipment.  
57 Almost all newer equipment utilizes electronic  
58 control units to control equipment operation.  
59 Without the software and hardware needed to  
60 troubleshoot farmers and ranchers are forced to  
61 use the dealer for minor and major repairs. The  
62 cost of repairs and downtime has a severe  
63 impact on our bottom line and adds undue  
64 stress to our lives. Farmers, ranchers, and  
65 independent repair technicians need fair access  
66 to the tools necessary for repairing equipment.

67  
68 **Meat Processors Curriculum**

69 Local butchers are struggling to find skilled  
70 labor to keep up with demand. MFU supports  
71 developing and funding curriculum and  
72 apprenticeship programs at the secondary and  
73 high school levels to train people in all facets of  
74 meat processing.

75  
76 **Fairness for Farmers**

77 Food security is of major concern to American  
78 consumers in a changing world. Adopting  
79 policies that address food security will be of  
80 great benefit to our producers and offer  
81 protections to consumers. For too long,  
82 producers and consumers have been subject to  
83 “cheap food policy”, which gives corporate  
84 monopolies control of our food dollar and  
85 furthering food inequality.

86  
87 Supply chain issues will continue into the future  
88 caused in part by corporate consolidation and  
89 trade wars.

90  
91 Foreign nations and large corporate monopolies  
92 have been allowed to manipulate markets and  
93 supply chains for far too long, endangering the  
94 sustainability of family agriculture and putting

1 consumers at risk of food shortages. We resolve  
2 that:

- 3 • Increase price discovery and  
4 transparency in cattle markets
- 5 • Require mandatory COOL for beef and  
6 pork
- 7 • A reinstatement and strengthened  
8 enforcement of the Grain Inspection and  
9 Packers and Stockyards administration  
10 (GIPSA)
- 11 • Promote diverse and value-added  
12 market opportunities and livestock  
13 processing
- 14 • Urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to  
15 follow through with anti-trust  
16 investigations in the agricultural sector  
17 and prosecute any violators of the laws  
18 in place.
- 19 • We must minimize the foreign influence  
20 and control of crop production supplies  
21 in the United States.
- 22 • Encourage domestic production of  
23 commodity inputs.
- 24 • The commodity loan program must be  
25 changed, to include more crops, and a  
26 loan rate that reflects 85% of the parity  
27 price for a given commodity. This will  
28 both provide producers with a higher,  
29 more stable price and refill our strategic  
30 commodity reserves, furthering our food  
31 security.
- 32 • Communities and local governments  
33 should be involved in aiding  
34 policymakers in the creation of local  
35 supply chains.

36  
37 Encourage federal and state governments to help  
38 fund the startup or continuation of local food  
39 processors and distributors.

40  
41 **Farm Bill**

42 We urge the passage of a Farm Bill to provide  
43 certainty for Montana family farmers and  
44 ranchers. The Farm Bill includes important farm  
45 safety net programs and nutrition programs that  
46 impact millions of Americans nationwide –

47 whether they are producers or consumers. We  
48 need the right farm bill in order for farm families  
49 and rural communities to thrive.

- 50 • Strengthen the farm safety net through  
51 increased price-based triggers to reflect  
52 higher prices and input costs.
- 53 • Expand and enhance permanent disaster  
54 programs so that family farmers and  
55 ranchers can recover quickly.
- 56 • Expand conservation programs to help  
57 family farmers and ranchers enhance  
58 good conservation practices to support  
59 a healthy climate.
- 60 • Promote resilient regional food systems  
61 and diverse markets.
- 62 • Support adding a Competition Title to  
63 the Farm Bill.
- 64 • Support a permanent Special  
65 Investigator and Chief Competition  
66 Officer within USDA
- 67 • Support a strong Nutrition Title.
- 68 • Increased baseline funding is needed.
- 69 • Expand Livestock Risk Protection  
70 (LRP) to include sheep.

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84



## 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

**ARC** – Agriculture Risk Coverage

**BCTP** – Bison Conservation Transfer Program

**BSE** – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**CAFO** – Concentrated animal feeding operations

**CBB** – Cattlemen’s Beef Board

**CCC** – Commodity Credit Corporation

**CDL** – Commercial Driver’s License

**COOL** – Country of Origin Labeling

**CRP** – Conservation Reserve Program

**CSP** – Conservation Stewardship Program

**DEQ** – Department of Environmental Quality

**DOJ** – Department of Justice

**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

**FOIA** – Freedom of Information Act

**FSA** – Farm Service Agency

**FTC** – Federal Trade Commission

**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

**ISDS** – Investor-State Dispute Settlements

**LRP** – Livestock Risk Protection

**MFU** – Montana Farmers Union

**NAIS** – National Animal Identification System

**NFU** – National Farmers Union

**NPS** – National Park Service

**NRCS** – Natural Resource and Conservation Service

**PARITY** – The average regional cost of production of a commodity

**PLC** – Price Loss Coverage

**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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