2027 Priorities

Food Security	Health Care	Competition	Climate Resiliency	Water and Land Use
- Access to affordable, quality food is a basic human right **- Promote resilient regional food systems and diverse markets** **- Raise the commodity loan rate to a level that reflects the cost of production, which will encourage a return to commodity reserves** **- Reinstate mandatory country of origin labeling for beef and pork** **- A label must accurately reflect the contents of the product being sold including country of origin** **- Support the next generation of family agricultural producers** **- Educate the public about food labels and common practices of production**	**- We believe health care is a fundamental right** **- Support funding Medicaid and Medicare, which directly benefit rural hospitals** **- Support increased telehealth and telemedicine access** **- Incentivize providers to practice in rural areas, improving access to and quality of care** **- Increase access and funding for mental health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and addiction services** **- Focus on food nutrition education and nutrient dense food to prioritize preventive health care**	**- Demand fair prices throughout the food system supply chain and market strategies that result in positive profit margins** **- Urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to follow through with antitrust investigations** **- Encourage USDA to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act and GIPSA** **- Support a permanent Special Investigator and Chief Competition Officer within USDA** **- Support including a competition title in the Farm Bill** **- Support agricultural Right to Repair** **- Support the U.S. Constitution in which Congress has oversight of all federal taxes and tariffs**	**-We recognize the interdependence of climate, soil health, and food production and support efforts to sustain the balance of all three** **- Promote developing crops, varieties, and animal breeds that perform under extreme circumstances** **- Partner with rural communities and utilities to increase their use of renewable energy** **- Encourage the expansion of biofuels** **- Support Risk Management Agency (RMA) to credit cover crops and intercropping instead of penalizing their use** **- Support RMA programs to insure all crops and livestock raised in Montana**	**- Support a moratorium on new data centers until enforceable safeguards are in place** **- Support water law with prior appropriations doctrine** **- Support retaining Montana groundwaters and surface waters for the use of Montanans in Montana** **- Oppose the drilling of exempt wells that affect existing water users** **- Support federal and state funding to address the backlog of maintenance on water storage and delivery systems** **- We only support waste water injection when it has been treated to the minimum standards for irrigation water** **- Support a farmland and rangeland protection policy to encourage the continuation of agriculture vs urban development**

MONTANA FARMERS UNION 2026-2027 POLICY AND PROGRAM

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2026-2027 MONTANA FARMERS UNION POLICY AND PROGRAM

(Bolded language is new language adopted at the Oct. 16th - 17th 2026 MFU Annual Convention)

PREAMBLE

We the members of Montana Farmers Union, advocate for the preservation of rural community life and the independence of farmers living on the family farm.

We believe that the health and prosperity of family farms and rural communities is directly tied to the health and prosperity of humanity at large.

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

Our promise, delivered through cooperation, legislation, and education is to continue to strengthen our family farms system and cooperative programs that benefit farmers, consumers, laborers, and rural communities alike.

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

AGRICULTURAL POLICY

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

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

- We urge lawmakers to provide local, state, and federal legislation to create programs and remedies for reducing obstacles to beginning farmers (and ranchers). We support mentorship and apprenticeship programs on farms and ranches. Urge full and continued funding of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) beginning or young farmer and rancher programs. (2023)

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

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

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

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

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

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

- Support a farm program that provides adequate support to the producers and that support be provided at the grassroots level.

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

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

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

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

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

- Urge full funding, staffing, and training for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in county-based offices. Oppose consolidation of county offices. (1999)

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

- Support fully funding federal and state USDA programs and use of designated funding through full implementation and dispersal to selected applicants. (2025)

PARITY

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

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

COMMODITY LOAN, RESERVE, AND PRODUCTION CONTROLS

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

  - Price and/or income support mechanisms for agricultural commodities that establish a floor under market prices and enables producers to obtain their income from the marketplace. (2022)
  - Price supports should primarily be provided by Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) nonrecourse, commodity loans.
  - Flexible loan maturity periods should be able to be extended at the discretion of the producer for up to 18 months, with the producer able to forfeit after nine months.
  - Income support, price support, and CCC loan rates should be set at levels to ensure producers receive a fair return on their investment. The loan rate should not be for less than the USDA national average cost of production. CCC loan rates should be adjusted annually to reflect inflation and productivity.
  - Income support, price support, and CCC loan rates should be annually

adjusted in an upward manner to prevent market and planting distortions.

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

- USDA will offer per bushel storage rates for commodities when prices fall below a designated loan rate, which is set near the midpoint between the variable and full cost of production for each commodity. Enrollment in the storage program will cease when prices recover.
- Farmers may enter any portion of their crop into storage, which must remain enrolled in the program until the market price for the commodity reaches the release price, or approximately 130 percent of the loan rate.
- Economically sound inventory caps should be set on each commodity. Should the inventory cap be reached for a commodity, a voluntary set-aside program may be made available by USDA.
- When the release price is reached, the farmer may sell the commodity into the market or hold the commodity, but storage rates will cease.
- Allow the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to manage price-depressing surpluses by providing producers incentives to plant dedicated energy crops on acres which are now, or may be produced, in surplus.
- Commodity support based on actual production history (APH), where available. For cases without APH, the program yield cannot be lower than county Farm Service Agency yields. Additionally, we urge the establishment of APH floors to protect producers in the event of successive crop failure brought on by natural disasters.

- Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) can be extended, on request, by producers for an additional nine months if the crop remains unsold. Producers cannot be required to repay loans if they have not been paid for the commodity pledged as collateral. (2025)

- We urge USDA's Farm Service Agency to give certified organic producers the option of valuing their crops for Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) marketing assistance loans at a rate that reflects verified organic market value, using authority USDA already has to adjust loan rates for type, quality, and other factors, rather than limiting organic crops to the lower conventional commodity loan rate. (2026)

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

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

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

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

- Marketing Assistance Loans and programs like the Loan Deficiency Program should be eliminated because they undermine the benefits of the commodity loan programs. (2020)

FARM AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

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

- Call for continued protection of borrower stock.

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

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

- Support an effort to meet beginning farmer’s credit needs and those whose credit needs cannot be met by commercial lenders.

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

RISK MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

- Producers' crop insurance designation should not be adversely affected by the growing of a cover crop. (2025)

- We urge USDA's Risk Management Agency to create an online Organic Crop Insurance Specialist Finder, modeled on its Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm agent locator, so organic producers can easily find crop insurance agents and loss adjusters who understand organic production practices and policies and want to serve organic farmers. (2026)

- Support RMA to allow use of intercropping and companion cropping. (2024)

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

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

- Support a cap on the amount of subsidies an individual can receive for federal crop insurance. (2023)

- Support that funding must be directed to family farms rather than large corporate farms. (2024)

- Support a dual enrollment option for ARC (Agriculture Risk Coverage) and PLC (Price Loss Coverage), which allows producers to receive the higher of the two calculated payments. (2024)

- We support the Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) and support expansion to include sheep. (2024)

CROPS AND SEED

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

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

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

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

- We oppose the consolidation of seed companies and ownership of plant genetics. (2023)

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

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

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

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

SPECIALTY CROPS

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

- USDA programs must include floriculture and horticulture farmers in programs such as Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF). Floriculture, nursery crops, and cut flowers are federally recognized specialty crops. (2026)

- We support the Specialty Crop Block (SCB) grant program, and encourage continued research, development, and marketing of new and existing specialty crops in Montana. (2018)

- Support development of Montana vineyard production and marketing through Montana wineries. (2022)

HEMP

- Support laws to allow production of hemp, including, but not limited to:
    - Ensuring the availability of quality seed.
    - Assuring that hemp growers will have unmitigated access to the banking system and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and that local banks update their policies to current hemp laws.
    - Allowing producers to sell and ship seed across state lines.
    - Create a crop insurance program that covers producers in a manner similar to other commodities. (2019)
    - Encourage MSU and other research institutions to begin field trials of hemp in a variety of climates around the state and region.
    - Lobby for hemp to be regulated as a food, feed, and fiber product by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and/or USDA.
    - A label should accurately reflect the contents of the product. (2020)

WOOL

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

- We support the establishment and increased production capacity of domestic wool processors. (2024)

- We support marketing, research, and education efforts to increase the demand for domestic wool products. (2024)

LIVESTOCK

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

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

- Support a fully funded vaccine bank. (2018)

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

- Yellowstone Bison shall not be relocated to any other area of Montana without a complete Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). (2011)

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

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

- Effective bison and elk management is an important component of the prevention of the spread of brucellosis and to the protection of private property. Prevention of brucellosis is in the interest of public health and safety.

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

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

- Require labeling of any co-mingled meat or meat products from foreign sources or non-animal proteins as “co-mingled with foreign sources” and/or “co-mingled with non-animal proteins.” (2024)

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

- Urge any foreign meats or other food stuffs entering the United States be subject to the same standards that apply to United States meats and other food stuffs.

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

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

- Raise the beef check-off rate from $1 to $2 and start a second check-off program under the Commodity Promotion Research and Information Act of 1996, or a beef check-off under Montana State Law, when the following changes are made to the beef check-off: (2023)

- Check-off dollars be used to promote only livestock born, raised, and processed in the United States. (2013)
- Allow Cattlemen’s Beef Board (CBB) to contract directly with any entity, including any national non-profit organizations, businesses, university researchers, advertising and marketing agencies, and other consultants. (2008)
- Reform the national Beef Board to reflect proportional representation from all national agriculture organizations. (2005)
- Any state check-off should be executed by the existing Montana Beef Council. (2024)
- All funding should be directed towards promotion and research of Montana beef products and production. (2024)
- Allow for check-off expenditures to protect USA beef and cattle from unfair trade practices, and to protect the U.S. herd from import practices which threaten cattle herd health and beef consumers. (2005)
- Allow for check-off expenditures to promote branded products from small and large packing entities. (2005)
- Require all packers to pay into the check-off program when purchasing cattle. (2005)

- Support the use of per capita fees to fund services in the Department of Livestock. (2026)

- Support mandatory price and volume reporting of livestock, including "captive supply" by all major packers. (2021)

- Support the continued eradication of New World Screwworm (NWS) in the United States and bans on imports of live animals from areas of known infestations until all threat is eliminated and uncompromising verifiable safeguards are in place. (2025)

- Recognize the potential threat of transmission of avian influenza between wild and domestic populations of birds and livestock. We urge all possible mitigation efforts and use of sound science practices to prevent transmission. (2024)

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

- Any National Animal Identification System (NAIS) should address herd health only. MFU urges the following: (2013)

- Exclude feeder cattle from the rules and include funding for state record keeping. (2011)
- We urge the Department of Homeland Security to provide the full funding necessary to create and maintain the database and provide compensation to producers for their program implementation costs. (2005)
- Mitigate producer liability for contaminated food products. (2005)
- This system should not impose any additional costs to the producer. (2020)
- Use of proprietary information should include clear limits to ensure the information is not used by packers to discount producer prices, be subjected to a Freedom of Information Act request, or passed to telemarketers, etc. (2005)
- Control of the confidential database needs to remain under the control of the federal government. (2005)
- Access to producer information should be provided for animal disease and bio terrorism trace-back only. (2005)
- Ensure uniformity of identification system with tracking technology and database management. (2005)

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

- Support the judicious use of antibiotics. (2015)

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

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

DAIRY

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

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

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

POLLINATORS

- Continue and expand research and education aimed at protecting bee health as well as development and enhancement of native pollinator population.

- Support USDA programs that provide financial support to producers willing to plant pollinator-friendly habitats. (2020)

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

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

CONSERVATION

- Support keeping Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) as separate programs. (2018)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Support education and control of known and emerging invasive species to preserve Montana natural resources. (2010)

- To keep rural communities, farms, and ranches viable, we encourage new Conservation Reserve Programs (CRP) with a 25% maximum acreage enrollment per farm rather than 25% of a county's farmland. (2003)

- Allow CRP lands to be withdrawn early from their contracts in order to be put into production for **perennial biomass and/or oilseeds for biofuel production**. There would be no penalties for early withdrawal as long as the land is kept in **aforementioned** production for the term of the original CRP contract. (2006)

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

- Support Inventory Management Soil Enhancement Tool (IMSET). (2026)

WATER

- Support the use of water storage through impoundment structures, conservation measures, USDA Small Watershed Program, and implementation of soil health principles as primary means for water development. (2023)

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

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

- Support water law with prior appropriations doctrine. (2026)

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

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

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

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

- Support closing exempt well loopholes and reviewing cumulative development impacts to protect senior water rights, domestic wells, groundwater supplies, and streamflow. (2026)

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

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

- Oppose broadening the definition of what waters are covered under the Clean Water Act that may unduly burden family farmers and ranchers. (2021)

- Oppose the broadening of the federal government’s jurisdiction over a group of waters simply because the bodies of water are near each other. (2021)

- Oppose legislation which allows federal reservation of wilderness water rights.

- Oppose removal of dams on the Snake and Columbia River systems. (1999)

- We believe that salmon and dams can coexist on the Snake and Columbia River systems. (2025)

- Oppose amendments to the Clean Water Act that pertain to non-point source pollution, which adversely affects family farms. (1992 & 2022)

- Recognize that degradation of water occurs through natural means and request that such degradation be taken into consideration when monitoring for non-point source pollution.

- Urge a water development program to include the construction and rehabilitation of multiple use water storage facilities and delivery systems.

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

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

-**We oppose federal and state agencies forcibly shifting the responsibility for irrigation weirs, dams, and other lake and river systems built by those agencies to local irrigation districts, which are not trained or staffed to maintain or repair these structures. (2026)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Object to EPA or DEQ from exempting entire aquifers for wastewater injection or disposal. (2024)

LAND USE

- We urge local, state, and federal governments to take appropriate actions to protect suitable farmlands and rangelands from development for non-agricultural uses. (2023)

- Request that trespassers be held liable for any damage done to private property **including** along public access streams.

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

- We discourage new mineral extraction until an EIS is completed. We encourage the Montana legislature to fund the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sufficiently to comply with current law. (2014)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Urge a more transparent and thorough permitting process for Class II Oil and Gas Solid Waste Disposal Sites that will include a mandatory EIS. (2013)

- Support the strengthening of Montana's Class II Solid Waste Disposal Sites laws to match or exceed North Dakota statutes to protect Montanan's land and resources. (2013)

- Support production of sustainable fuels when wastewater is treated to at least irrigation water quality standards on site. (2024)

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

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

- Support a farmland and rangeland protection policy to encourage the continuation of farming and ranching versus urban development. (2022)

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

- We support voluntary government programs, initiatives, and proposals that offer financial incentives to private landowners for keeping farm and ranch lands intact while not limiting or restricting agricultural practices or livestock management or requiring that private property be open to public access. (2023)

- MFU urges the Montana court system and Montana legislature to recognize and uphold historic boundaries and corners. (2025)

FOREST AND RANGELAND STEWARDSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

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

- We support 'Good Neighbor Authorities' and other state and federal policies that reduce regulatory obstacles to collaborative management and stewardship of forests rangeland. (2024)

- Oppose "let it burn" policies. (2002)

- Support practical grazing practices on public land that support good stewardship.

- Vacant grazing allotments on public land should be made immediately available to Montana livestock producers affected by drought or other natural disaster. (2020)

WILDLIFE

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

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

- Support adjustments in Federal and State grazing fees according to quality of grazing units.

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

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

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

- Support a state management plan for grizzly bears and wolves created in collaboration with family farmers and ranchers. (2019)

- Support a program that alerts the public to grizzly bears and predators in their area. (2026)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The Department of Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of wildlife while under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and is responsible for reimbursement of livestock losses caused by said wildlife. (2010)

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

- Support the rights of future generations of Montanans to have a clean and healthy environment. (2024)

- Support feasible air, **soil,** water, and land use standards to prevent degradation of our environment and quality of life for present and future generations.

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

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

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

- Large corporate concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) must be required to **mitigate damage** to the environment. (2022)

- Support an adequate review, prior to the start of each coal bed methane development, to identify and propose mitigation measures to ensure that the proposal will not:
    - Cause qualitative or quantitative problems to off-site water resources;
    - Alter vegetative characteristics;
    - Cause subsidence; or
    - Negatively affect the land in other ways. (2000)

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

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

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

- Continue climate change monitoring and research to provide agricultural producers with the knowledge and ability to adapt to climate change and to reduce their environmental impact. (2014)

- Any climate solution should address fair and equitable compensation for all agricultural producers to sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gases. Solutions should also address the development of alternative energy resources. (2022)

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

- Support immediate development of safe methods of disposal of nuclear waste in the state of origin.

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

- Support first priority for water used in domestic, municipal, and agricultural consumption.

- Urge feasible legislation and educational programs, which will assist in protecting groundwater from pollution and depletion beyond natural recharge.

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

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

- Support the expansion of the pesticide container recycling program through increased drop-off locations and times. (2016)

- Oppose the disposal of hazardous waste by mixing it with fertilizer and other farm products, which is unacceptable and a dangerous practice that threatens the environment and human health.

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

- Support statewide recycling. (2015)

- Encourage research and implementation of cost-effective means to reinstate, continue, and expand recycling efforts. (2025)

- Support replacement of non-renewable materials with renewable materials. (2015)

- Support a farmer educational program to assist access to and development of renewable packaging, marketing, and production. (2015)

PESTICIDE REGULATIONS AND PESTICIDE APPLICATORS

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

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

- Recognize the use of pesticides as a valuable tool in conventional agriculture. (2019)

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

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

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

RESEARCH

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

- Support an increase in the Wheat & Barley Committee Check-off Program to provide funding for research with an emphasis on ARS. (2010)

- Oppose corporate donor generated funds for agriculture research, facilities, and capital equipment without adequate care to preserve the integrity of research and accountability to the taxpayer of the land-grant university system. (2004)

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Encourage research that develops and delivers practical information to farmers and ranchers to assist in adopting practices to mitigate climate change (2022).

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

- Favor the establishment of an acreage dedicated to a long-term organic cropping system at each of the state Agricultural Experiment Stations for the purpose of conducting research in areas such as crop rotations and yield trials, soil nutrition, weed and pest management, plant disease, etc. (2004)

- Support public funding allocations for organic production systems, **including seed variety research,** that are commensurate with organic's contribution to the overall agricultural economy. (2021)

- Urge that Agricultural Experiment Stations make effective use of farmer advisory committees.

FOOD AND FOOD SAFETY

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

- USDA and FDA should deliver educational programs to assist in understanding and meeting Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requirements. (2017)

- Urge closer control of additives, non-food substitutes, and fillers in foods.

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

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

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

- Support the Departments of Agriculture, Public Health and Human Services, and Livestock creating and monitoring standardized state programs for food safety at farmers' markets and within the "cottage" food industry. (2013)

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

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

TRUTH IN LABELING

Imitation of Meat:

- Support meat being defined as flesh from an animal harvested in a traditional way being used as food. (2018)
- Oppose cellular cultured food being defined as agriculture. (2018)
- Require products containing protein derived from insects to be labeled. (2024)

- Support that foods be labeled as bio-engineered or contain bio-engineered ingredients based on the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard. (2024)

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

- Urge country of origin labeling of all agricultural commodities and processed food products sold in the U.S. (2000)

- We support truth in labeling with organic, local, regenerative, and Made/Grown in Montana so consumers can make true, informed decisions and are not misled. (2024)

AGRITOURISM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MARKETING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- We support state attorneys general's filing suit to enforce current federal antitrust laws including the Sherman Antitrust Act and the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921. The Federal Trade Commission, Senate Judiciary committee, and the Department of Justice should enforce current regulations. If large concentrations of power still remain, necessary legislation should be enacted to regulate those corporations just as we do other monopolistic entities. (2018)

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

- Support adequate funding for the state's Growth through Agriculture (GTA) program. (2016)

- Support family farms in their diversification of additional revenue streams, including direct to consumer markets. (2026)

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

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

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

- Support modernization and expansion of the State Meat Inspection Program. (1993)

- We support the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program to allow state-inspected meat to be sold across state lines. There must be a commitment to funding more inspectors to aid in the development of more local processing. (2022)

- Support USDA in the use of remote grading of beef, the availability of equipment, and training of inspectors. (2024)

- We declare that all producers receive full indemnity from the agricultural activities occurring on lands not under their ownership or management; that they be held harmless from the intrusion of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and genetically engineered (GE) crops upon their lands and the associated costs and burdens of said intrusion; and that they receive full immunity against litigation in cases of GMO and GE drift contamination into their lands. (2013)

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

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

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Urge federal and state government to expand, invest, and improve the in-state investment and loan programs.

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

- Continue to support federal and statewide efforts by regional economic development programs that benefit agriculture such as the Food and Agriculture Development Centers (FADC) and the Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC).

- Encourage federal and state government to help fund the startup or continuation of local food processors **and distribution**. (2020)

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

- We urge reinstatement and funding for Regional Food Business Centers. (2025)

TAXATION

- Support the concept that taxes are levied to provide services people cannot provide efficiently for themselves based on the following principles: (1990)
    - Property taxes are a stable source of revenue and should be based on equitable appraisal. (1990)
    - Income taxes based on ability to pay are the fairest method to generate revenue. (1990)
    - Taxes on business should not be restrictive, but appropriate to their use of public services. (1990)

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

- We support ongoing research regarding taxation laws, and distribution back into rural communities and family farms. (2024)

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

- Agricultural "inventories" should not be taxed if business inventories are exempt from taxation.

- Support Rural Microbusiness Tax Credit values that are inflation-adjusted. (2010)

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

- Encourage tax exemptions for energy saving devices.

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

- Urge the Montana legislature to remove all tax advantages that are intended for agriculture from being utilized by non-agricultural operations. (2023)

- Support increasing the minimum gross sales amount required for qualifying agricultural tax rate that reflects the current ag economy. (2026)

- Support fair and equitable taxation of **agricultural commodities, including timber and** marijuana.

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

- Urge the creation of an oversight agency that collects and reports data on the effectiveness of opportunity zones that "benefit" rural communities. (2024)

- Support accountability standards for opportunity zone projects. (2024)

- Support incentives for Montana businesses that buy local, fresh, and seasonably available products.

Fair Market Value

- Support fair and equitable valuations for all agricultural operations.

- Support a land classification system which assures uniform and equitable assessed values, which must be straightforward and easy for taxpayers to understand.

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

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

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

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

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

Estate

- We support estate tax relief for family-owned farms, ranches, and small businesses in order to facilitate the transfer of those enterprises to the next generation. We also recommend:

  - Opposing any reductions to any federal estate tax exemptions. (2016)
  - Simplify the exemption qualification rules and requirements.
  - Implement graduated rates.

- Retain reasonable agriculture exemptions. (2005)

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

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

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

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

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

Utilities

- Support the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association in its efforts to retain the existing property tax rates on electric transmission and distribution facilities.

- Oppose imposition of an excise or sales tax on electric utility customers.

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

Transportation

- Oppose any increase in the Farm Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) tax.

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

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

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

Worker's Compensation

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

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

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

TRANSPORTATION AND RAILROADS

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

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

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

- Farm equipment operators should be exempt from Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements. (2011)

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

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

- Urge special emphasis in addressing the **deteriorating** infrastructure in the immediate future. Getting crops to market requires special handling, speed, and affordability, and if not addressed quickly is not only a safety issue but a national security problem. (2012)

- Oppose indiscriminate freight rate increases.

- Support the continuing viability of the less-than-shuttle facility system of elevators in Montana which enhances diversity of rail movements by Montana farmers' production. We oppose any actions by railroads that will not encourage the long-term viability of the less-than-shuttle facilities in Montana. (2013)

- Ask the Montana State Attorney General and the United States Antitrust Department to vigorously investigate and enforce laws to prevent price fixing of retail motor fuels. We ask that both state and federal funding be appropriated to enforce antitrust and predatory pricing laws. (1999)

- Oppose further deregulation of railroads.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Oppose autonomous freight transportation on our highways and interstates. (2025)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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

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

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

NET METERING

- Enact legislation to expand the benefits of net metering by **eliminating** the current cap of 50kW. (2014)

- Allow multiple meters for effective use of wind/solar systems on farmsteads and for community net metering. (2014)

- **Allow** renewable energy generators to bank excess energy as credit beyond 12 months for future credit. (2014)

ENERGY

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

- Oppose the selling of Northwest Energy's generating and transmitting assets to an out-of-state entity not regulated by the state of Montana. (2026)

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

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

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

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

- Support the retention of a Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and oppose the changing of the statute without information based on the best possible science and approval by public review.

- Encourage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to add additional feedstocks for renewable diesel and jet fuel, and research other oilseeds as biofuel feedstock. (2023)

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

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

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

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

- Renewable energy grants to producers must be restored and fully funded. (2025)

- The increase in generating capacity created by new hydroelectric generation projects in existing facilities that come online should be classified as renewable energy. (2012)

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

- We encourage electric co-ops throughout the nation to build and acquire the renewable generation and transmission resources necessary to ensure the same balance of cost-based power. (2003)

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

- Encourage continued and new agricultural use as a priority on energy project sites. (2025)

PUBLIC UTILITIES

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

- Support wholeheartedly the financing and continuation of our Rural Electric Cooperatives and Rural **Telecommunications** Associations.

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

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

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

- Favor universal **communications** service at reasonable cost.

- Rural **communications** and electric co-ops should be exempt from paying fees for right of way on state and federal lands. (1999)

- Urge continuation of district-based elections for the Montana Public Service Commission **and oppose PSC commissioners being appointed or the removal of districts**.

- We oppose any efforts to regulate our rural electric cooperatives and rural **communications** cooperatives by the Public Service Commission. (2012)

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

- Support net neutrality. (2014)

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

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

- Support renewable energy programs and projects. (2020)

- Encourage rural electric co-ops to support installation of distributed renewable systems and give preference to power purchases from their members vs. large-scale energy systems. (2024)

- Support a moratorium on data centers until concerns about solvency, environmental impact, taxes, site and energy infrastructure, and employment, as well as concerns from the local community, are met. (2026)

- Any data center development proposal would require an affirmative vote from impacted voters prior to any approval or permitting. (2025)

DATA OWNERSHIP AND ACQUISITION

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

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

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

- Oppose businesses profiting from the collection or sale of personal and aggregated data. (2024)

- Support a “do not collect” provision regarding data collection and storage. (2024)

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

- Require equipment manufacturers to present a simple one-page End-User License Agreement (EULA) which explains the loss of right to repair and giving up ownership of data. (2026)

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

MEDICAL CARE

- Support increased telehealth and telemedicine access. (2023)

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

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

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

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

- Increase access to and oppose cuts in health care benefits and all premium rate increases to all Medicare and Medicaid recipients, veterans, **and health care plans**. (2023)

- Urge recruitment of primary care physicians and other essential health care providers to rural Montana communities. (2013)

- Increase support for rural emergency medical services. (2023)

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

- Increase support for critical access hospitals, rural health clinics, assisted living facilities, **and hospice**. (2023)

- Support increased funding for home health, emergency medicine, increased use of telemedicine, population health, and care coordination for our rural communities. (2023)

- Support funding for mental health, substance abuse, and addiction resources especially for rural communities. (2019)

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

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

- Support funding for research and implementation of food prescription interventions. (2024)

- Support nutritional interventions and produce prescriptions to be funded through health care streams. (2024)

- Support federal and state government funding of programs and facilities for children and adults with developmental disabilities. (2024)

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

- Oppose any changes in the program, which would raise or move the retirement age.

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

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

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

RURAL SOCIAL ISSUES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

- A strong democracy is foundational for achieving successful implementation of policy that MFU members support. (2024)

- Success of our democracy requires a judicial system that upholds our Constitution and our established law and order system. (2024)

- Supreme Court rulings that take place through the emergency docket (known as the shadow docket) must be required to give a full written explanation on how their ruling is based on federal law or the Constitution. This is necessary information for federal appeal court judges in future rulings and for the general public. (2025)

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

- Anyone in the U.S. must receive due process, where they are informed of the law they may have broken, their rights are explained to them, and they are provided the opportunity for legal representation and the right to a hearing. (2025)

- Urge the federal and state government to continue funding the Experience Works Program.

- Support and urge recognition of the importance of Senior Citizen's Centers as a vital function in our communities.

- Support the continuation of nutrition programs for people of all ages as well as other beneficial programs.

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

- Retaining existing rural Post Offices.
- Support reforms to the Postal Service that would increase solvency by changing the congressional mandate that pensions be prepaid in advance.
- Support fair and equitable service fees.
- Insist on current services through offices and blue boxes be maintained or expanded.
- Oppose any privatization of the Postal Service. (2020)

- Oppose the federal government and USPS changing rules that negatively impact absentee ballots. (2026)

- Oppose right-to-work legislation.

- Support an equitable minimum wage. (1990)

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

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

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

- **Require** voting processes which secure the ease of access to voting by all citizens, including but not limited to: mail-in ballots, ballot drop boxes, early voting, convenient access to polling places, and same day registration. (2022)

- Oppose gerrymandering of districts to favor political boundaries over population numbers, disenfranchising rural communities. (2026)

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

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

FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

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

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

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

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

- **Require** federally funded food programs in schools, institutions, and military **facilities and** installations **to purchase agricultural products, including** meat and dairy products**, grown, raised, and** produced in the United States**, with a priority on locally grown and raised products**.

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

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

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

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

- Require the disclosure of AI use. (2026)

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TARIFFS

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

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

- Support the U.S. Constitution in which Congress has oversight of all federal taxes and tariffs. (2026)

- Oppose trade deals that unevenly regulate imports and exports between the U.S. and other nations. (2015)

PUBLIC POLICY

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

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

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

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

- Federal spending priorities must not shortchange our domestic family farm agriculture.

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

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

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

  - Global trade should not drain the wealth of one country for the benefit of others. (2003)
  - Oppose the outsourcing of State and Federal Government jobs. (2004)
  - There must be a mechanism in place to mitigate the adverse effects of currency exchange rate fluctuations.
  - The sovereignty of the USA and its states to govern within their borders must not be diluted or internationalized at all.
  - We demand a transparent democratic process in trade negotiations and oppose the abdication of congressional responsibility by granting fast track in the approval of any trade agreement. (2013)
  - Oppose currency manipulation regarding trade. (2015)

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

- We support National Security. We appreciate the importance of the mission at Malstrom Airforce Base and the Montana National Guard. We oppose the objection by the military to instillations of communication towers, windmills, solar panels, or other privately funded projects on private property without fair compensation to the landowner. (2024)

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

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

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

- Oppose expanding trends to massive land holdings in America by foreign individuals and corporations and foreign and domestic non-profits.

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

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

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

- Support volunteer fire departments and EMTs. (2019)

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

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

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

- National budgets must be passed that support fair taxation by closing loopholes that let higher-tax bracket individuals avoid paying their fair share, investing the recovered revenue in middle-class priorities like health care, food assistance, and reducing the national debt. (2025)

FOREIGN POLICY

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

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

- Support the reinstatement of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2025)

COOPERATIVE POLICY

- Establish and fund curriculum at the high school and postsecondary level involving all facets of the cooperative business model. (2024)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Establish and continue a positive and aggressive approach to cooperative education and philosophy for Farmers Union members.

- Emphasize the need to select cooperative directors who understand, and are loyal to, the ideas of cooperative business principles.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Support development of collaborative agricultural partnerships beyond the cooperative business model, such as grazing associations, grass banks, and agricultural commons models. (2026)

PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY

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

- Support full funding for public schools. (2020)

- Reject diverting public funding from public schools to any private schools and/or private charter schools. (2023)

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

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

- Support the Agriculture in Montana Schools program.

- Support a Farm to School program that highlights the core elements of procurement of and education about Montana agricultural products and school gardens. (2010 & 2021)

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

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

- Urge adequate funding for the continuation and expansion of vocational-technical education.

- Commend and support postsecondary efforts such as WWAMI (a consortium made up of the states of Wyoming, Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho) and WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education), both of which offer educational opportunities, particularly in professional programs, not available in Montana.

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

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

- Recognizing the value of Agriculture Education and specifically the FFA and 4-H programs, we urge the state legislature to provide the support necessary to strengthen and continue these programs.

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

ORGANIZATION POLICY

- We believe in the benefits of a grassroots organization.

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

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

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

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

ORGANIZATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage MFU and NFU to continue using any tools, including digital platforms, to connect family farmers directly with consumers, strengthen direct marketing, and share important information about products, nutrition, food safety, and environmental issues. (2026)

National Farmers Union

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

- Strengthen ties and communication with member state organizations.

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

- Urge the creation of a National ambassador program made of graduates of Farmers Union leadership programs to bring new states into Farmers Union and help emerging and struggling states with building membership and organizing. (2026)

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

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

Montana Farmers Union

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

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

- Hold seminars for leadership development.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORGANIZATION EDUCATION POLICY

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

- Support organizational education incorporating Farmers Union philosophy as a source of renewed commitment and as a means of organizational development so that our agricultural vocation and our rural communities may benefit.

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

- Install a program to educate the public about the accomplishments of the American family farmer, including their high-quality productivity and environmental awareness. The program is to include how the U.S. farm policy works to ensure affordable food for the entire nation and the small part of the agriculture budget the farmer receives.

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

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

- Link with other state and national groups to research and develop farm programs and policies.

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

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

2026 Policy Committee

Chair, John Wicks – Ledger
Anna Bold – Big Sandy
Sarah Degn – Sidney
John Ferrat – Toston
Ryan Gunderson – Power
Beau Milton – Ovando
Nate Powell-Palm – Belgrade
Walter Schweitzer – Geyser (MFU President)
Rachel Prevost – Great Falls (MFU Staff)
Bella Folino – Great Falls (MFU Staff)

2027 SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS

Right to Repair

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

Meat Processors Curriculum

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

Fairness for Farmers

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

Supply chain issues will continue into the future caused in part by corporate consolidation and trade wars. Foreign nations and large corporate monopolies have been allowed to manipulate markets and supply chains for far too long, endangering the sustainability of family agriculture and putting consumers at risk of food shortages. We resolve that:

- Increase price discovery and transparency in cattle markets.
- Require mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) for beef and pork.
- A reinstatement and strengthened enforcement of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).
- Promote diverse and value-added market opportunities and livestock processing.
- Urge the DOJ to follow through with antitrust investigations in the agricultural sector and prosecute any violators of the laws in place.
- We must minimize the foreign influence and control of crop production supplies in the United States.
- Encourage domestic production of commodity inputs.
- The commodity loan program must be changed to include more crops and a loan rate that reflects 85% of the parity price for a given commodity. This will both provide producers with a higher, more stable price and refill our strategic commodity reserves, furthering our food security.
- Communities and local governments should be involved in aiding policymakers in the creation of local supply chains.
- Encourage federal and state governments to help fund the startup or continuation of local food processors and distributors.

Farm Bill

We urge the passage of a Farm Bill to provide certainty for Montana family farmers and ranchers. The Farm Bill includes important farm safety net programs and nutrition programs that impact millions of Americans nationwide – whether they are producers or consumers. We need the right farm bill in order for farm families and rural communities to thrive.

- Strengthen the farm safety net through increased profitability-based triggers.
- Expand and enhance permanent disaster programs so that family farmers and ranchers can recover quickly.
- Expand conservation programs to help family farmers and ranchers enhance good conservation practices to support a healthy climate.
- Promote resilient regional food systems and diverse markets.
- Support adding a Competition Title to the Farm Bill.
- Support a permanent Special Investigator and Chief Competition Officer within USDA.
- Support a strong Nutrition Title.
- Increased baseline funding is needed.
- Expand Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) to include species other than just cattle.
- Support reinstatement of the positions of federal employees lost during the "deferred resignation program" and probationary employment positions.
- Encourage full staffing levels to adequately administer USDA programs.

Data Centers

Montana Farmers Union opposes data center development unless it clearly:

- Provides substantial, enforceable, and long-term benefits to Montana communities, family farms and ranches, and existing utility customers.
- Undergoes thorough, timely and transparent public review of its community, economic, agricultural, and environmental impacts before approval.
- Protects public participation, local decision-making authority, private property rights, agricultural lands, and affected Tribal Nations.
- Pays the full cost of its energy use and infrastructure needs without shifting costs or financial risks to existing customers or taxpayers.
- Supports additional energy generation and grid capacity, with a preference for new Montana-based renewable energy, storage, and community energy investments.
- Protects agricultural water rights, domestic water supplies, water quality, aquatic ecosystems, and drought resilience through responsible use, monitoring, conservation, and mitigation.
- Avoids harm or displacement to productive agricultural land, soils, livestock operations, roads, public services, natural resources, and surrounding communities.
- Maintains financial responsibility for closure, reclamation, pollution, water impairment, and other long-term impacts without leaving costs to the public.

Farm Labor

MFU supports a robust domestic workforce for agriculture jobs by encouraging economic and tax benefits to employers who hire locally and employees who work locally in ag production jobs.

Production agriculture struggles with having a reliable and skilled workforce. The H-2A visa program allows seasonal employees to fill that need. Congress needs to reform legislation to reflect current needs of production agriculture while protecting the rights of those employees and the original intent of helping production agriculture only.

USDA Reorganization

USDA must be well-funded and fully staffed to serve the needs of all family farmers, ranchers, and our communities. The main federal headquarters should remain in D.C. and any reorganization of USDA, or other changes to the department and its programs, should be made only after thorough and transparent consultation with family farmers, ranchers, and others serving the agricultural community.

Separation of Powers

MFU supports the constitutional duties allocated to Congress, the courts, the executive branch, and the states and their separation of power, along with the checks and balances herein.

Tariffs & Trade

American producers have spent a tremendous amount of their check-off dollars and a significant amount of time building trust between us and the countries buying our agricultural commodities. Those gains quickly evaporate when our administration adopts chaotic and overly aggressive trade policy.

Whereas: The U.S. Constitution gives Congress authority over tariffs and international trade and Congress has only relinquished some of that authority to the president in emergency situations. Two major courts have ruled the president does not have authority to levy tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, with a Supreme Court ruling likely in spring.

Whereas: Tariffs are a sales tax on U.S. businesses importing goods into our country, with a large portion passed on to U.S. consumers. Those sales taxes on our businesses and consumers raise prices, contributing to inflation. Current tariffs would amount to the largest tax increase on our middle class in U.S. history.

Whereas: Countries will retaliate against U.S. tariffs, with their retaliation often focused on U.S. agricultural exports, causing great harm to American farmers.

Whereas: Wide-spread, general tariffs are harmful because they destabilize world economies. Effective tariffs must be narrowly focused on the goal of protecting national security.

Therefore, be it resolved that MFU supports:

- robust international trade.
- negotiations that eliminate the use of wide-spread general tariffs.
- limited and strategic or targeted use of retaliatory tariffs.
- tariffs must be reviewed and approved by Congress.
- negotiations that require movement towards a level playing field where other countries improve their labor and environmental standards closer to U.S. standards.

MFU recognizes that our Constitution grants trade and tariff authority to Congress.

Immigration Reform
Immigration and legislated labor standards in the U.S. built the strongest middle class and economy in the world. Comprehensive immigration reform must be passed to grow our economy and provide necessary agricultural workers. These immigrants must have a pathway to citizenship and/or residency.

Due Process
Anyone in the U.S. must receive due process where they are informed of the law they may have broken, their rights are explained to them, and they are provided the opportunity for legal representation and the right to a hearing.

Monetary Policy
Effective fiscal policy by the administration and Congress should work in tandem with Federal Reserve monetary policy.

Medicaid
Medicaid funding must be restored and increased if necessary to maintain rural hospitals. Current tax credits and/or premium assistance for the Affordable Care Act must be permanently extended without any reductions.

Supporting Ukraine and Democracy
MFU supports democracy, the territorial integrity of friendly democracies, and the rights to liberty of family farmers the world over. MFU supports continued aid to Ukraine, in support of its defense against the Russian invasion. Further, MFU supports that any proposed peace accord respects the full territorial integrity of Ukraine and unconditional withdraw of all foreign adversarial troops from Ukrainian territory.

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.

Agritourism – A commercial enterprise that links agricultural operations with tourism, allowing visitors to engage in recreational, educational, or entertainment activities on a farm or ranch.

Antitrust – Relating to legislation preventing or controlling trusts or other monopolies, with the intention of promoting competition in business.

APH – Actual Production History

ARC – Agriculture Risk Coverage

Biofuels – Renewable fuels derived from biomass, such as plants, algae, or animal waste.

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

CIS – Cooperative Interstate Shipment

Commodity loan – A loan for agricultural producers, where their stored crop is used as collateral.

Cooperative – A business owned and operated by its members to meet their common economic, social, or cultural needs through a democratically controlled enterprise

COOL – Country of Origin Labeling

CRP – Conservation Reserve Program

CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

DEQ – Department of Environmental Quality

DOJ – Department of Justice

DSA – Designated Surveillance Area

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

ESA – Endangered Species Act

FADC – Food and Agriculture Development Center

Farm Bill – The Farm Bill is a package of legislation passed roughly once every five years that has a tremendous impact on farming livelihoods, how food is grown, and what kinds of foods are grown. The current Farm Bill is called the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. It was enacted into law in December 2018 and expired in 2023 and has since been extended through 2026.

FDA – Food and Drug Administration

FDIC – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

FSA – Farm Service Agency

FSMA – Food Safety Modernization Act

GIPSA – Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

GE – Genetically engineered
GMO – Genetically modified organism
Good Neighbor Authority – The Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to authorize states, counties, and federally recognized Indian tribes to conduct certain projects on federal lands in pursuit of specified land management goals.
GPS – Global positioning system
GRAS – Generally Recognized As Safe
GTA – Growth Through Agriculture
GVW – Gross Vehicle Weight
ISDS – Investor-State Dispute Settlement
LRP – Livestock Risk Protection
MCDC – Montana Cooperative Development Center
Medicaid – Provides health coverage for people with low incomes.
Medicare – Provides health coverage to those older than 65 and to some younger individuals with certain disabilities.
MEPA – Montana Environmental Policy Act
MFU – Montana Farmers Union
NAIS – National Animal Identification System
NFU – National Farmers Union
NPS – National Park Service
NRCS – Natural Resource and Conservation Service
Packers and Stockyards Act – A U.S. federal law designed to ensure fair competition and fair trade practices in the livestock, meat, and poultry industries for the benefit of producers, growers, and consumers. It prohibits unfair, deceptive, unjustly discriminatory, and monopolistic practices.
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
SCB – Specialty Crop Block
Subsidy – A sum of money granted by the government or a public body to assist an industry or business so that the price of a commodity or service may remain low or competitive.
Telehealth – The use of technology to support and promote a wide range of health care services, including both clinical and non-clinical services.
TIP – Transition 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.
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
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)
WICHE – Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
WSA – Wilderness Study Area
WWAMI – Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho medical education program

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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES CRIB SHEET

Types of Motions

- Main Motion: Introduce a new item
- Subsidiary Motion: Change or affect how to handle a main motion (vote on this before main motion)
- Privileged Motion: Urgent or important matter unrelated to pending business
- Incidental Motion: Questions procedure of other motions (must consider before the other motion)
- Motion to Table: Kills a motion
- Motion to Postpone: Delays a vote (can reopen debate on the main motion)

Every Motion Has 6 Steps

- Motion: A member rises or raises a hand to signal the chairperson.
- Second: Another member seconds the motion.
- Restate motion: The chairperson restates the motion.
- Debate: The members debate the motion.
- Vote: The chairperson restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes.
- Announce the vote: The chairperson announces the result of the vote and any instructions.

Requesting Points of Something

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate or voting. It's permissible to state a point during a meeting where the chairperson needs to handle a situation right away.

Point of Order: Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
Point of Information: A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a nondebatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.
Point of Inquiry: A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.
Point of Personal Privilege: A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.

Action	What to say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a second?	Can be debated?	Can be amended?	Votes needed
Introduce main motion	“I move to...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	“I move to amend the motion by...” (add or strike words or both)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee.	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	"I move to adjourn the meeting."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Extend the allotted time	"I move to extend the time by _ minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a motion	"I move to table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Verify voice vote with count	"I call for a division."	No	No	No	No	No vote

Action	What to say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a second?	Can be debated?	Can be amended?	Votes needed
Object to considering some undiplomatic matter	“I object to consideration of this matter..."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up a previously tabled item	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move to reconsider our action to..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move to suspend the rules and consider.."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close the meeting for executive session	"I move to go into executive session."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Personal Preference- noise, room temperature, distractions	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote