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1 **FOREWORD**

2 **Glossary of Terms**

3

- 4 AAPs: Accepted Agricultural practices
- 5 AFBF: American Farm Bureau Federation
- 6 AMP: Accepted Management Practices
- 7 BNPs: Best Management practices
- 8 Current Use: Use Value Assessment
- 9 FSA: Farm Service Agency
- 10 NRCS: Natural Resource Conservation Service
- 11 RAPs: Required Agricultural practices
- 12 USDA: United States Department of Agriculture
- 13 UVA: Use Value Assessment or Current Use
- 14 UVM: University of Vermont
- 15 VAAFM: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
- 16 VANR: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
- 17 VDEC: Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
- 18 VTC: Vermont Technical College
- 19 VTFB : Vermont Farm Bureau

20

21 **Purpose of VTFB**

22

23 VTFB is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary
24 organization governed by, and representing, the families of farmers
25 and foresters, united to improve the net income of its members and
26 preserve Vermont’s rural quality of life. The mission of VTFB is to
27 serve and advance Vermont agriculture. (2013)

28

29 Members come together to analyze their problems and
30 formulate action to achieve educational improvement, economic
31 opportunity and social advancement and, thereby, to promote the
32 national well-being.

33

34 VTFB is a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation,
35 (AFBF), a national organization of farmers and ranchers in all 50
36 states and Puerto Rico. The positions expressed in these pages
37 represent VTFB’s views on various issues as they relate to
38 Vermont. The positions of the national Farm Bureau organization
39 collectively are expressed through the AFBF.

40 Farm Bureau is local, county, state, national and international

1 in its scope and influence and is non-partisan, non-sectarian and
2 non-secret in character. Farm Bureau is the voice of agricultural
3 producers of all kinds, all sizes and all levels as determined by its
4 members.

5

6 **AGRICULTURE, GENERAL** **1**

7

8 A strong and prosperous agricultural economy is vital to
9 Vermont's rural quality of life. We urge that the economic viability of
10 Vermont's agricultural industry be paramount as public policies are
11 formulated. In this regard, VTFB specifically supports:

12

13 1) Use Value Assessment of all farm and productive forestland.

14 2) Voluntary sale or transfer of development rights.

15 3) Reducing capital gains and inheritance taxes.

16 4) Increasing investment tax credits.

17 5) Cost/benefit evaluation of all environmental and land use
18 regulation.

19 6) Compensation to landowners for any reduction in land value
20 caused by law or governmental regulation.

21 7) Right to Farm and Right to Forest (2011)

22 8) Strengthening and diversifying value-added processing of
23 agricultural products.

24 9) Efforts to educate and inform the public on ways farmers
25 provide stewardship of the land.

26 10) The development and implementation of a long-term national
27 farm policy. (2013)

28

29 We strongly support groups, organizations and institutions
30 which help strengthen Vermont agriculture.

31

32 VTFB supports the diversification of farming to include
33 additional activities such as agritourism and on-farm rural
34 enterprises. (2016).

35

36 VTFB supports that local USDA committees, particularly FSA
37 and NRCS, should consist of farmers who are elected by local
38 farmers. And, these farmers should maintain leadership roles in
39 boards and committees that have direct oversight of their business

1 practices. (2010)

2 VTFB encourages increased funding by the USDA in the form
3 of low interest loans and grants to be used for a variety of
4 alternative manure management practices. (2011)

5

6 VTFB seeks greater commitment from the UVM Extension to
7 engage with concerns of the working farm and forest communities
8 and welcomes dialogue about the future of the UVM Extension.
9 (2016)

10

11 VTFB supports UVM and VTC maintaining their dairy and
12 livestock programs for the purpose of hands-on, experiential
13 student learning in all phases of farming. (2011) (2016)

14

15 VTFB supports adequate funding of the UVM Extension, and
16 we offer our support to maintain its specialized ability to work with
17 the agricultural and rural communities, particularly in subject
18 areas and localities not serviced by other agencies. (2011) (2015) We
19 encourage UVM Extension to add dairy and livestock specialists.
20 (2016)

21

22 VTFB supports agricultural enterprises of any size or
23 commodity using traditional or non-traditional methods that serve
24 small or large markets. We support all agricultural production,
25 including organic, provided that the producer follows Accepted
26 Agricultural Practices (AAP's) or Accepted Management Practices
27 (AMP's) for forestland.

28

29 VTFB supports full funding of the Farm Agronomics Practices
30 (FAPs) program. (2010)

31

32 VTFB supports funding the Vermont Agri-bility/Agri-medicine
33 Project, a joint venture between UVM Extension and Vermont
34 Center for Independent Living to assist disabled farmers to
35 continue active and productive lives on the farm. VTFB supports
36 Farm First, which is taking on the Agri-bility roll. (2015)

37

38 Acknowledging its "land grant" origins, we support all efforts of
39 the UVM to strengthen Vermont agriculture and urge UVM

1 leadership to be guided in key policy decisions by its agricultural
2 heritage. Further, we believe that the UVM should:

- 3 1) Make the educational needs of Vermonters its priority.
- 4 2) Expand and improve the four-year agricultural program
5 at an affordable tuition.
- 6 3) Retain the title of the agricultural school in perpetuity
7 and keep Vermont's agricultural community as its primary
8 focus.

9
10 VTFB urges UVM to reaffirm Vermont's agricultural heritage of
11 working forests by re-attaining their accreditation by the Society for
12 American Foresters. (2010)

13
14 We urge the Legislature to appropriate adequate funding with
15 a minimum annual stipend of \$200,000 to support county fairs and
16 field days.

17
18 We encourage active participation in Vermont's county fairs
19 and field days by the Vermont AAFM. Furthermore, we urge that
20 sufficient resources be allocated by the Agency on an annual basis
21 to maintain a first-class Vermont Building at the Eastern States
22 Exposition (the "Big E") to both underline the importance of
23 agriculture in Vermont and educate the public on Vermont's
24 agriculture heritage and industry.

25
26 VTFB supports the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board
27 and urges the close monitoring of the Fund it oversees. 2013
28 (2015)

29
30 VTFB supports legislation to prevent unauthorized persons
31 with fraudulent and false pretenses from gaining access to
32 agricultural production facilities including employment by making
33 such activities a criminal offense. (2014) (2015) (2016)

34
35 VTFB supports industrial hemp as a cultivated crop for uses
36 such as seed, fiber and oil. (2014)

37
38 VTFB supports efforts to study and publicly provide a fuller
39 understanding of Agriculture and Forestry as an economic engine

1 in the state's economy. (2014)

2

3 **AGRICULTURE AGENCY**

2

4

5 VTFB supports cooperation between the Vermont AAFM, UVM
6 and other institutions with laboratory facilities to assure that the
7 Vermont agricultural community has access to laboratory facilities
8 (such as diagnostic and pathology) for agricultural science issues
9 including animal health, public health, seed and feed, and
10 fertilizer. (2013)

11

12 VTFB recommends the inclusion of the Department of Forests,
13 Parks and Recreation into the AAFM. (2011)

14

15 VTFB recognizes that the AAFM supports the largest industry
16 in this state and requires the necessary resources to maintain its
17 leadership and regulatory oversight.

18

19 VTFB supports the role of the AAFM in maintaining all
20 oversight and enforcement of regulations regarding permitting,
21 environmental regulations and inspections of farms and to allow
22 time for current regulations to realize their potential. (2013)

23

24 VTFB supports the AAFM's Accepted Agricultural Practices
25 AAPs, the definition of "farming" in 10 VSA 6001 (22), and the
26 definition of "farm system" in 30 VSA 219a. These should be used
27 to define an agricultural operation by all State agencies. (2010)

28

29 VTFB supports making the Secretary of AAFM (or his or her
30 designee) a permanent member of the UVM's Board of Trustees.
31 (2008)

32

33 **ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES**

3

34

35 VTFB supports legislation to control the use of all-terrain
36 vehicles (ATV's). We favor compensation to property owners for
37 damage done by ATV's and appropriate fines for negligent
38 operation. We support ongoing educational efforts to inform the
39 public of its responsibility to respect private property and

1 landowner rights.

2

3 VTFB urges that ATV's should be regulated in similar manner
4 as snow machines, including a provision for policing of landowner
5 permissions by organized clubs. (2002)

6

7 **BIOTECHNOLOGY**

4

8

9 VTFB, recognizing the importance of biotechnology to the
10 future economic well-being of the state, encourages funding efforts
11 to develop biotech industries. We oppose placing prohibitions or
12 undue restrictions on the development of biotechnology products
13 which have been deemed safe and effective by appropriate
14 regulatory agencies. Further, we oppose creating lists of users of
15 agricultural biotechnology, which may target users unfairly.

16

17 VTFB opposes any legislation that would restrict the uses of
18 any product, biotech or organic, that has been approved by the
19 USDA, FDA, EPA, etc. We believe that existing legal safeguards are
20 adequate to protect all farmers & consumers. (2006) (2015)

21

22 VTFB calls upon the State of Vermont and particularly the
23 AAFM to actively enforce the genetically engineered seed labeling
24 law by adopting clear rules which state that such seeds must be
25 labeled with the words "genetically engineered" or "genetically
26 modified" in a way that a consumer will know, without a doubt,
27 that the seeds contain genetically-modified traits. (2005)

28

29 VTFB supports unbiased, scientifically-based evaluations
30 concerning human and animal safety and wholesomeness, as well
31 as the environmental impacts of biotechnology and the right of
32 farmers to use these products based on these evaluations.

33

34 VTFB supports the right of individual farmers to use modern
35 technology in farming practices. (2010)

36

37 **COMMODITIES**

5

38

39 VTFB supports continuation and improvement of the Vermont

1 state meat inspection program under the direction of the Vermont
2 AAFM. We support national legislation to allow meat inspected
3 under the Vermont program to be sold in interstate commerce. We
4 support a meat grading system to be implemented, which will
5 enable livestock producers to expand their market. We encourage
6 the Vermont AAFM to continue to promote local and regional
7 markets for Vermont livestock raised for slaughter.

8
9 VTFB urges passage of legislation which eases the federal
10 inspection process required for interstate shipment of meat which
11 already passes standards.

12
13 VTFB urges the Beef Promotion Board to increase support of
14 dairy beef. (2011)

15
16 VTFB opposes vertical integration, when it substantially
17 reduces market competition in the beef industry. (2006) (2016)

18
19 VTFB supports the AFBF request that the Congress and
20 appropriate regulatory agencies monitor commodity markets to
21 prevent price manipulation and promote an unencumbered free
22 market for agricultural products. (2011)

23
24 We urge that all non-producer owned agricultural processors
25 and handlers be bonded at no less than 60% of any claim value for
26 which they are found liable.

27
28 Funds for disaster relief and crop failure payments should be
29 paid directly to the affected farmer and may also apply to a
30 landowner if it is determined that the land had lost functional or
31 marketable value because of the disaster. Qualification for disaster
32 relief should be extended to isolated individual events, instead of
33 requiring whole county designations. (2001)

34
35 VTFB urges the Congress to provide adequate funding for
36 school breakfast and lunch programs offering the choice of milk
37 with all perishable food products to be served at proper
38 temperatures. We support programs such as the Women, Infants
39 and Children (WIC) Program and the Special Milk Program. (2012)

1 VTFB encourages the continuation of the Vermont “Farm to
2 Family” coupon program because it is beneficial to farmers and
3 needy families.

4
5 VTFB supports the expansion of the “Farm to Family” program
6 for producer-only farmers’ markets to include eggs, meat and dairy.
7 (2007)

8
9 VTFB supports use of locally-produced food in school lunch
10 programs. (2002)

11
12 **CONSUMER PROTECTION** **6**

13
14 VTFB supports including trucks with gross vehicle weights of
15 one ton or more and agricultural equipment under Vermont’s
16 lemon law statute.

17
18 Out-of-state fruits, vegetables and horticultural products
19 offered for sale in Vermont should bear signs clearly stating the
20 place of origin of such produce at the point of purchase. (2001)

21
22 VTFB requests that all foods have a Country of Origin label
23 that is WTO compliant. (2013) (2015)

24
25 VTFB supports change in milk labeling law that would require
26 the town and state where the milk was bottled to be printed, as
27 opposed to the plant number code which is currently used. This
28 would better identify to the consumer where the product is coming
29 from. (2014)

30
31 **CROP & LIVESTOCK PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT** **7**

32
33 VTFB recommends that pesticide regulation and pesticide
34 monitoring programs remain in the control of the AAFM.

35
36 VTFB believes that in the finding of fact concerning restriction
37 of insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides or herbicides under the
38 Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), appellant should be required
39 to show actual harm rather than calculated potentials. (2016)

1 Congress should monitor FQPA implementation vigorously to
2 ensure compliance with legislative intent. (2016)

3
4 **DAIRY**

8

5
6 VTFB supports dairy supply management initiatives, including
7 mandatory, that will assist in creating greater price stability. We
8 support a state, national and industry-supported, long-term,
9 counter cyclical program addressing the volatility in milk pricing
10 that will provide for the viability of the dairy industry. Any
11 program should recognize the need for regional production of milk
12 for food security purposes. Further, any program should
13 recognize the variability of significant input costs, World Trade
14 Organization compliance and reflect the true value of surplus
15 milk. (2011) (2015) (2016)

16
17 VTFB believes that any dairy farmer income safety net
18 program enacted should meet or exceed the benefits provided to the
19 Northeast dairy farmers over the last Decade. (2013) (2015)

20
21 VTFB supports the innovative development of new dairy
22 products and a way to profitably market these products in a
23 national and international market. (2010)

24
25 VTFB supports working with cooperatives and other agencies
26 to retain the Federal Milk Market Order system. We oppose any
27 reclassification of reconstituted milk under the Federal Order
28 program.

29
30 VTFB supports reform to the price discovery mechanism for
31 classified pricing. (2010)

32
33 VTFB resolves to work with dairy cooperatives in supporting
34 key issues and policies being developed in the Vermont Legislature.
35 (2010)

36
37 VTFB recommends that national dairy policy include:
38 1) an increase in solids not fat (SNF) minimum standards in

1 fluid milk to match the California standards.
2 2) a promotion assessment equivalent to the domestic
3 promotion assessment levied on all imported products and
4 commodities. (2011)
5

6 VTFB supports a regional effort through legislation to ensure
7 that dairy farmers receive a fair share of the consumer's dollar for
8 fluid dairy products. (2009)
9

10 VTFB supports the decrease of the industry somatic cell count
11 in fluid milk from dairy cows to 400,000 cells/ml to be competitive
12 in the global marketplace. (2012)
13

14 VTFB encourages Milk Promotion Committees to facilitate
15 placement of milk vending machines in schools adjacent to lunch
16 areas. Vermont Colleges should also be encouraged to promote
17 dairy sales through placement of vending machines throughout
18 their buildings. (2010)
19

20 VTFB believes that milk vending machines purchased with
21 milk promotion money should be filled exclusively with dairy
22 products, as defined by Vermont statute. (2006)
23

24 The federal school lunch program should be lobbied so they
25 would subsidize 10, 12 and 16 oz. containers of milk as part of the
26 school lunch program, as well as the 8-oz. cardboard container.
27 (2009)
28

29 VTFB requests that whole milk (total fat content 3.25%) be
30 offered as a choice in all schools as part of the school lunch
31 program. (2016)
32

33 VTFB supports the use of raw milk in the production of cheese
34 aged over sixty days, provided producers follow Good
35 Manufacturing Practices (GMPs). (2009) (2016)
36

37 VTFB should ask the Vermont Legislature to amend current
38 law to require all raw milk be tested commensurate with accepted
39 risk, and that the producers be inspected the same as commercial

1 farms. (2014)

2

3 VTFB supports current law on raw milk sales and is opposed
4 to the expansion of raw milk sales. (2015) (2016)

5

6 VTFB opposes any changes to the Capper-Volstead Act that
7 allows farmers to market milk collectively without violating antitrust
8 laws. (2007)

9

10 VTFB supports truth in labeling that only beverages produced
11 by mammals be labeled as “milk.” (2010) (2016)

12

13 **DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS**

9

14

15 Recognizing the complexity of contracts for the sale or lease of
16 development rights, we urge that all agreements contain specific
17 time frames with a defined date of commencement and termination
18 not to exceed 25 years in length with all easements and rights
19 reverting to the original grantor or successor upon expiration of the
20 contract. (2011)

21

22 If public funds are used to purchase development rights, we
23 believe that the following principles should apply to the purchase:

24

1. Fair market value should be paid to the landowner.

25

2. All tax obligations should be fully disclosed and explained
26 prior to purchase.

27

3. Any restrictions on use of the land should be clear and
28 limited to maintain a viable working landscape and allow
29 traditional uses, as well as innovative agricultural uses, such
30 as farm stands, bed and breakfasts, recreation, etc. for profit.
31 (2003)

32

4. Agreements should not restrict any new farming
33 methods, technology or the ability to diversify or change into
34 other types of agriculture such as ag tourism. (2012)

35

36 VTFB believes that property with development rights removed
37 should be taxed at its productive agricultural or forestry value and
38 the state Division of Property Valuation and Review should publish
39 and distribute guidelines to assist local listers in equitably

1 assessing these restricted lands.

2

3 The designation of land as “prime agricultural soils” should
4 not be the sole reason for a zoning or land use review board to
5 reject a proposed development. At the very least, a developer
6 should be granted the option of off-site mitigation by adding an
7 equivalent area of land to an ongoing farming operation. (2006)

8

9 The Vermont Land Trust and similar agencies should be
10 encouraged to foster small-scale agriculture or commercial
11 greenhouse and garden operations by assisting in conservation of
12 small parcels in high-impact areas. (2006)

13

14 VTFB supports continued funding of the Vermont Housing
15 Conservation Board. We oppose lowering the initial stewardship
16 allocation and support the requirement that the easement holder
17 pays continuing stewardship costs. (2012)

18

19 **DISEASE, INSECTS, PREDATORS & PESTS** **10**

20

21 VTFB supports continuous appropriations from the Vermont
22 Legislature to study, educate and train the agricultural community
23 about Johnes disease. (2010)

24

25 VTFB supports the removal of the responsibility for licensing
26 and regulations of pet shops from the State Veterinarian. (2002)

27

28 VTFB supports preventative programs for chronic infectious
29 diseases of dairy cattle, BSE (bovine spongiform encephalitis),
30 tuberculosis and brucellosis to provide vaccination and control
31 programs as necessary through a combination of private and
32 public funding, including adequate funding for the Vermont state
33 vet’s office within the AAFM, and that all such measures should be
34 considered part of an overall national security initiative. (2001)

35

36 VTFB supports awareness training and preparedness planning
37 among producers and state animal health authorities for, emerging
38 and exotic diseases of concern to livestock. (2014) (Chittenden
39 2015)

1 We support a diverse and healthy wildlife population in
2 Vermont. VTFB actively supports state, regional and national
3 policies that recognize that farm animals and agricultural crops are
4 at least as important as wildlife. We urge that management policies
5 recognize the priority of protecting both public safety and the
6 economic viability of agricultural enterprises from diseases such as
7 rabies, giardia and distemper. Further, we urge that policies
8 protect agriculture from predators which cause economic harm
9 and threaten crops and domestic animals. (2012)

10 VTFB recommends the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
11 pay FMV for proven losses to dairy cattle, beef cattle and sheep
12 from coyote attacks. Plus, institute a \$100 bounty on coyotes
13 until the populations are controlled. (2010) (RC2015)

14
15 VTFB supports livestock and crop producers' right to shoot
16 predators and other nuisance wildlife at baited locations using
17 lighting with prior notification of wildlife officials.

18
19 VTFB opposes any law or regulation prohibiting the use of
20 steel traps, including leg hold traps, for capturing predators,
21 varmints or fur-bearing animals.

22
23 **EDUCATION**

11

24
25 VTFB asks UVM and all land grant colleges to require all
26 students to take a course offered by the College of Agriculture that
27 covers issues such as how food is produced, what is required for
28 inputs and how much land is needed to feed the world in a fair and
29 balanced way. (2011)

30
31 VTFB requests that the Governor appoint at least one active
32 farmer to the UVM Board of Trustees. (2011)

33
34 VTFB urges the Vermont Department of Education to
35 recognize the importance of agricultural knowledge at the
36 elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels and provide both
37 financial and technical support for Agriculture in the Classroom
38 program.

1 VTFB supports agricultural and natural resource education
2 and establishing agricultural and natural resource education
3 programs at regional technical centers and high schools. (amended
4 2008) The Vermont Department of Education shall continue to
5 fund and support the FFA agricultural advisor position. (2012)

6
7 VTFB supports and encourages agriculture education in the
8 classroom and the use of local farm products in our schools. (2009)

9
10 VTFB recommends that the AFBF promote education about
11 the benefits of consuming fresh and whole foods as an increasingly
12 important part of domestic agricultural policy. (2006)

13
14 VTFB supports the full funding of the National Veterinary
15 Service Act of 2003 and the establishment and full funding of a
16 Vermont net tuition repayment program for large animal vets in
17 underserved areas. (2008)

18
19 We urge creation of an accredited four-year professional
20 development course for agriculture teachers. (2012)

21
22 VTFB calls for the establishment of a permanent clearinghouse
23 for the collection and distribution of curriculum materials and
24 educational resources on agriculture, including videos, computer
25 software, internet sites and farm tour information to be staffed
26 collaboratively by the Vermont Department of Education and the
27 Vermont AAFM. (2012)

28
29 We support development and introduction of a comprehensive
30 curriculum for elementary and secondary schools on agriculture
31 and forestry with balanced content bases on sound science. We
32 encourage teaching students about production agriculture,
33 animals, nutrition and forestry.

34
35 VTFB supports developing an Education-Business Coalition in
36 vocational education for the purpose of addressing the needs of
37 both interests.

38
39 VTFB supports an apprenticeship program to train

1 slaughterhouse personnel by the UVM (UVM), Vermont Technical
2 College (VTC), vocational centers or any combination thereof.
3 (2012)

4
5 VTFB supports the growth of a farm apprenticeship programs
6 to be administered and funded through the AAFM in Vermont
7 institutions and organizations for the purpose of gaining on-farm
8 practical experience for those students graduating with an interest
9 in their future in the ag industry. (2007) (2013)

10
11 VTFB supports the designated “Spire of Excellence” for food
12 systems at UVM. (2013)

13
14 VTFB supports increased funding for agricultural programs at
15 VTC, including the 2 plus 2 (FARMS) program offered in
16 cooperation with the UVM. We support a seamless transition
17 between the two institutions for the 2 plus 2 program. We further
18 support continued funding for scholarships in the 2 plus 2
19 program. (2014) (2015) (2016)

20
21 VTFB supports UVM’s College of Agriculture Dairy Center of
22 Excellence. (2010)

23
24 VTFB supports an agriculture teaching program at VTC in
25 conjunction with a state college teaching program. (2009)

26
27 VTFB supports adequate state funding of special education.
28 (2012)

29
30 VTFB urges the U.S. Congress to fund special education at the
31 40% level promised when the Equal Educational Opportunities law
32 was passed.

33
34 VTFB supports local control of schools,
35 limited consolidation of schools within a geographic area and
36 maintaining and expanding school choice. (2012) (Addison 2015)

37
38 Repeal Act 46 which is forcing school consolidation, limiting

1 school choice and may in fact substantially weaken our entire town
2 meeting form of government. (2015)

3
4 VTFB supports an education finance reform plan, calling on
5 the Governor and Legislature to repeal current education funding
6 laws and enact a new law that incorporates all or some of the
7 following specific recommendations:

- 8 a) Relies less heavily on property taxes.
- 9 b) Controls education spending without interfering with
10 local decision-making.
- 11 c) Provides our schools with the resources they need to
12 educate our children.
- 13 d) Fairly distributes resources and tax burdens throughout
14 our state.
- 15 e) Supports the Use Value Appraisal (UVA) program or UVA
16 for farmland.
- 17 f) Supports a plan to allow districts to combine to reduce
18 the number of Supervisory Districts. (2006)

19
20 VTFB supports school choice and those programs that
21 recognize and hold school systems accountable for the quality and
22 performance of education in our Vermont school systems. (2016)

23
24 VTFB recognizes the statewide Farm to Plate initiative and will
25 work to educate its' members on the goals and objectives as well as
26 participate in the working groups when possible. (2011)

27
28 VTFB opposes unfunded education mandates by government.
29 (2007)

30
31 VTFB supports all aspects of agriculture and the continued
32 operation of a dairy herd by VTC for educational purposes. (2010)
33 (2016)

34
35 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

12

36
37 We urge that the federal Endangered Species Act differentiate
38 between species that are truly in danger of extinction and those
39 marginally threatened. We also recommend amendment of the

- 1 Vermont Threatened and Endangered Species Act to:
2 1) Require state cost sharing and compensation for species
3 preservation. (2011)
4 2) Change the method by which species are added to the
5 threatened or endangered list by making the process more
6 specific and providing automatic annual de-listing of
7 species.
8 3) Provide incentives and/or compensation to private
9 landowners where threatened or endangered species are
10 located.
11 4) Include business representatives and landowners on the
12 Endangered Species Advisory Committee.
13 5) Consider gene banking as an option for preserving
14 species. (2012)

15
16 VTFB opposes listing the lynx, wolf or the Indiana Bat as
17 endangered or threatened species. (2011)
18

19 VTFB opposes the reintroduction of wolves into Vermont.
20 (2010)
21

22 **ENERGY/UTILITIES, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY 13**

23
24 VTFB should be actively involved in any future restructuring
25 of Vermont's electric utilities. VTFB supports:

- 26 1) Unrestricted customer choice of electric supplier
27 2) Reasonable rules to allow consolidation of electric
28 distributors
29 3) Amendment of Vermont commercial law to allow farmer-
30 owned organizations to serve as consolidators to facilitate
31 negotiation of least-cost rates
32 4) Equitable treatment of rural customers
33 5) That Vermont utilities profit from power transit business
34 6) Maintenance of strong Vermont-based retail distribution
35 companies
36 7) Asset securitization and ensure that asset disposal will
37 also benefit rate payers.
38

39 VTFB favors efforts to maintain or lower electric rates in

1 Vermont. (2009)

2

3 VTFB supports production of renewable electricity on farms at
4 a rate of return on investment equal to or greater than that
5 supported by the Public Service Board for other utilities. (2009)

6

7 VTFB fully supports development of corn as a renewable
8 energy source in the State of Vermont. (2015)

9

10 VTFB supports more review on sites designated for commercial
11 wind & solar power. We support public participation in energy
12 project siting earlier in the regulatory process. Local governments,
13 residents, and AAFM should have status in the siting decisions of
14 renewable energy. (2015) (2016).

15

16 VTFB urges support for regional and national efforts to
17 develop sources of renewable energy from agricultural production
18 and land and to include wind, solar, fiber and hydro, as a priority
19 national energy policy, as is promoted by the 25 by 25 initiative.

20

21 VTFB supports tax breaks and other incentives directed
22 towards renewable on farm energy sources such as wind, solar,
23 hydro, biodiesel, biogas, methane and methane digesters, and
24 wood chip systems, and the development of educational programs
25 that provide technical advice in these technologies. (2010)

26

27 VTFB supports the use of approved outdoor furnaces and
28 should work to ensure that any regulations developed are favorable
29 to the agriculture and forestry communities. (2012)

30

31 VTFB supports recognition by the Agency of Natural Resources
32 to support corn burning appliances and devices that are allowed by
33 EPA regulations if the EPA does not have standards or tests for
34 corn to use wood pellets as a test. (2015)

35

36 VTFB supports facilitating the building of energy projects
using woody biomass as fuel, including commercial pellet
manufacturing. (2013)

1 VTFB recommends that fluorescent light bulbs be included in
2 the hazardous waste special drop programs sponsored by Solid
3 Waste Districts around the state. (2007)

4
5 VTFB supports net metering. (2013)

6
7 VTFB supports electric utilities charging an appropriate fee to
8 the net metering customer to cover their costs associated with
9 supplying electricity to the net metering customer when the
10 customers demand for electric power exceeds the net metering
11 generation. (2013)

12
13 VTFB opposes the Federal increase in the percentage of
14 ethanol in gasoline. (2012)

15
16 VTFB resolves to urge the State of Vermont to do all they can
17 to stabilize carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere by promoting
18 alternative energy systems and efficient heating and transportation
19 methods. (2010)

20
21 VTFB supports the continuing safe and timely operation
22 decommissioning of Vermont Yankee and consideration of
23 alternative fuels for power generation at the site. (2013)

24
25 VTFB supports exploration of reliable and viable alternate
26 energy sources for Vermont. (2014)

27
28 VTFB urges the Vermont Legislature do what's necessary to
29 bring broadband internet access to all homes and businesses in
30 the State of Vermont. (2014)

31
32 VTFB supports increasing the height limits on existing cell
33 towers to reduce the need for additional towers. (2015)

34

35 **ENVIRONMENT**

14

36

37 VTFB urges Congress to clarify and affirm that agriculture is
38 not subject to the Comprehensive Environmental and Liability Act
39 (CERCLA), nor to the Environmental Planning and Community

1 Right to Know Act (EPCRA), correcting misinterpretations of these
2 acts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2007)

3
4 VTFB supports a requirement that all EPA regulations,
5 rulemaking and procedures adopted regarding agriculture and
6 forestry be based on solid, peer-reviewed data and that the
7 requirements derived from both the Clean Air Act and the Clean
8 Water Act include standards-based performance goals based on
9 sound science with data subject to peer review. We also request
10 our Congressional delegation to support requiring a cost-benefit
11 analysis before implementation of all such regulation. (2010)

12
13 VTFB should promote the image of Vermont farms as
14 environmentally friendly, sustainable users of the land.

15
16 VTFB supports the development of a suitable no cost disposal
17 program for discarded tires and a recycling program for
18 agricultural plastic waste. (2013)

19
20 All regulations governing the uses of Vermont farm and
21 forestland should explicitly acknowledge that evidences of human
22 activity are a necessary, pleasing and desirable part of the natural
23 landscape.

24
25 VTFB supports climate change legislation with Cap and Trade
26 language that could create additional revenue for the agriculture
27 industry. Agriculture should not be included under the cap. (2008)

28 VTFB encourages cooperation between the Department of
29 Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Vermont AAFM (AAFM)
30 in providing resources for farmers affected by the perfluorooctanoic
31 acid (PFOA) contamination. We request the DEC and AAFM to
32 address the increased impact of contaminated water on soils,
33 crops, livestock and the farmers' livelihoods. 2016

34
35 **EQUINE**

15

36
37 VTFB aggressively supports full and equal status within
38 agriculture for Vermont's equine business owners. To achieve such
39 status, we support:

- 1) Equine business property being eligible as Agricultural property in UVA.
- 2) Inclusion of the equine businesses under the agricultural sales tax exemptions.
- 3) Maintaining an active equine committee within VTFB.
- 4) Trails, parking areas and camping sites for equine activity being made available in Green Mountain National Forest and State lands. (2013) (2015) (2016)
- 5) Developing an expanded definition of farm income from equine businesses. (2010) (2013) (2014) (2016)

VTFB shall continue to lobby the State of Vermont Office of Workers' Compensation about the unfairness of a single class code (8279) for the Equine Industry in VT. It imposes a serious financial burden to the industry and may even encourage some members to avoid carrying this important coverage. (2015)

VTFB supports revision of the Vermont Equine statute to set limitations of liability per incident. (2010)

FINANCE

16

VTFB supports permanent and dependable funding of the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) as a critical source of credit and capital for Vermont farmers. Further, we favor regular increases in the funding to keep pace with the increasing credit needs of farmers and urge VEDA to extend repayment terms to make loans more affordable. (2012) (2016)

Farm Credit agencies should not be bought and sold out of the control of the farmers involved. (2011) (2016)

VTFB supports efforts of the Farm Credit System to ensure that adequate credit is available for agriculture. (2006) (2016)

VTFB encourages increased funding by the USDA, in the form of low-interest loans and grants, to be used for alternative manure management practices (i.e. anaerobic digesters). (2007) (2016)

1 **FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY** **17**

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VTFB supports initiatives to improve and streamline food safety to ensure that policies and procedures are in place that build trust and reliability in U.S. agriculture. In addition to supporting good agricultural practices (GAP) we support guidelines that are tailored to the size, type and capacity of the farm. (2014)

VTFB supports the same regulatory and safety standards required for domestically grown products be required for imported products to protect consumer safety and prevent economic advantages. (2013)

14 **FORESTRY** **18**

VTFB supports research under the United States Forest Service [USFS] Forest Carbon Accounting Framework, defining the capacity of actively managed forests and forest soils to absorb and retain greenhouse gases such as CO2. This research is published in the annual Forest Inventory Analysis reports and disseminated through the Climate Change Advisors initiative to lawmakers, media, and the public. www.fis.fs.fed.us/forestcarbon

VTFB supports USFS amending its policy regarding fire. We support active timber management for the purpose of reducing destructive wild fire in the Urban/Wildlands Interface, and the encouragement of fire in forest domains where frequent burns are an appropriate management tool. (2016)

VTFB supports continuation of traditional uses on the former Champion Paper Company land and all State Forestland for recreational and commercial uses. (2011)

We support exclusive use of Vermont’s Acceptable Management Practices (AMP’s) to evaluate whether timber harvesting conforms with environmental quality standards. (2006)

VTFB supports landowner-based Green marketing initiatives which promote use of timber sourced from sustainably-managed and

Comment [LD1]: Discussed with Bruce Shields , author, on November 8, 2016 re footnote or leaving it in the text.

1 privately-owned North American woodlands, such as the
2 Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm
3 Systems PEFC certification. (2010)

4
5 Farmers should not be required to obtain zoning permits or
6 environmental review before converting forested land to
7 agricultural uses. (2011)

8
9 Forestland, like all agricultural land, must be economically
10 sustainable to remain viable. In order to maintain forests as a vital
11 part of Vermont's working rural landscape, we urge that the
12 following principles apply to all Federal, state and local zoning and
13 planning policy regarding forestland:

14
15 1)The average annual harvest of forest products should
16 approximate the long-term average annual growth of those forest
17 products.

18 2) Forestland must be assessed for tax purposes at UVA.

19 3) All generally-accepted silvicultural tools, including clear cutting
20 and aerial spraying, must be available to owners of forestland.

21 4) In order to promote development of robust value-added wood
22 manufacturing enterprises in rural towns, Vermont should devise
23 business-friendly legal, transportation, energy, communication,
24 economic, tax and regulatory policies. (2006)

25 5) Forest management plans should provide for multiple uses on
26 virtually all lands where feasible. (2012)

27
28 All government land acquisitions should meet the following
29 conditions:

30 1) The state and/or federal government obtains local (municipal)
31 approval before purchasing land in that community.

32 2) There is no net gain in the amount of land owned or controlled
33 by government as a result of the purchase.

34 3) Government land acquisition should be funded exclusively by
35 sale or trade of existing property.

36 4) Government-owned land should be valued by Listers and pay tax
37 to Towns in the same manner and rates as equivalent privately-
38 owned land. (2010) The Payments In Lieu Of Taxes [PILOT] must
39 not be reduced by the legislature to save funds for Montpelier at the

1 expense of Towns. (2016)

2

3 1. VTFB supports the revisions to the U.S. Forest Service
4 Roadless rule, which would protect existing roads and allow
5 the construction of new roads for the purpose of harvesting
6 timber, improving wildlife habitat and fighting forest fires.
7 (2005) VTFB supports maintaining forest roads on public
8 lands and designation of no additional Roadless areas.
9 Regulations of such roads should be by rule of USDA Forest
10 Service, and not transferred to EPA jurisdiction. (2013)

11

12 VTFB supports sustainable timber harvest in the Green Mountain
13 National Forest. (2003)

14

15 VTFB opposes the Wild Lands Project or any analogous attempt to
16 depopulate forested land in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.
17 (2006)

18

19 VTFB opposes the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) or
20 any similar acts and recognizes that the private ownership of
21 property is the foundation of a prosperous economy and a free
22 society.

23

24 VTFB opposes expanded government ownership of working rural
25 lands because of the threat to the resource base of the farm and
26 forest industries, the threat to the tax base of many rural
27 communities and in some cases, the threat to the survival of rural
28 communities.

29

30 VTFB supports the promotion and maintenance of current
31 sawmills and encourages development of new sites. (2003)

32

33 VTFB supports a coordinated national and state effort to halt the
34 spread of non-native plants, pathogens or pests destructive to forest
35 productivity, including, but not limited to, Asian Long-horned
36 Beetle (ALB), Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and the
37 Garlic Mustard plant. Appropriate measures may include:

38 1) Ban on untreated woody materials such as blocking or pallets

- 1 from China and other countries with potential insect invaders;
2 2) Monitoring of populations, both visual and using pheromone
3 traps;
4 3) Removal and disposal of all infected trees or clearing of infested
5 sites with appropriate quarantines and enforcement;
6 4) Incorporation of identification and eradication information into
7 all continuing education programs conducted for farmers, foresters,
8 loggers and the public, including displays at fairs, conventions and
9 other public events. (2010)

10
11 VTFB supports the ban on importation of firewood into the State of
12 Vermont. (2014) (2016)

13

14 **GOVERNMENT - MISCELLANEOUS** **19**

15

16 VTFB supports the reaffirmation of the fundamental practice
17 of political power and participation beginning with and flowing
18 from the people at the local level.

19

20 VTFB urges that public hearings affecting farmers be fully and
21 prominently warned and held in locations and at times to maximize
22 participation by farmers.

23

24 We oppose all unfunded government mandates and request
25 the Legislature to request an annual report from Vermont's
26 congressional delegation regarding the cost of new federal laws and
27 regulations. (2016)

28

29 VTFB supports legislation to prohibit transfer of funds for use
30 contrary to the designated purpose of such funds.

31

32 **GOVERNMENT - STATE** **20**

33

34 VTFB believes that:

35 1) All appointments to House Committees and Chairs of
36 those Committees in the Vermont House of Representatives
37 should be made by a three (3) member committee consisting
38 of the Speaker, the Majority and the Minority leader.

39 2) Any bill that would increase taxes should require a

1 super-majority of at least 60 percent in both the Vermont
2 House and Senate to become law.
3 3) Issues dealing with agriculture be debated on their own
4 merit and not held hostage by other non-germane issues.
5

6 VTFB opposes taking funds from the property tax abatement
7 programs for other purposes (2012)
8

9 VTFB opposes the legalization of recreational marijuana (2015)
10 (2016)
11

12 VTFB shall work closely with the Administration in the rule
13 making process if recreational marijuana is legalized. (2016)
14

15 **HEALTH**

21

16
17 VTFB supports legislative efforts to address the cost crisis in
18 health care and to make health insurance available and affordable
19 to all Vermonters. (2011)

20 VTFB supports these considerations to be included in any
21 restructuring of health care by the U.S. Congress:

- 22 1) Portability across state lines
- 23 2) Tort reform to decrease insurance costs to primary health
24 providers
- 25 3) No tax upon uninsured individuals or small businesses
- 26 4) Tax equity between employer-directed and individual
27 insurance premiums
- 28 5) Free choice among various levels of insurance coverage
- 29 6) Not to discriminate against pre-existing conditions (2009)
30

31 VTFB supports using net income to determine eligibility and
32 premiums if income sensitivity is used as an indicator in any new
33 health insurance initiative (2014) (2015) (2016).
34

35 VTFB supports legislative efforts to provide a healthcare
36 program that emphasizes free market competition and consumer
37 freedom of choice. (2014) (2015) (2016)
38

39 VTFB supports repeal of the Federal Affordable Care Act of

1 2010, to permit implementation of health care measures
2 embodying the principles outlined above. (2010)

3
4 VTFB supports maintaining our rural hospitals.

5
6 VTFB believes the Legislature and Executive Branch should
7 re-examine, revise and repeal laws and regulations that mandate
8 joint and severable liability for excessive losses by health insurers,
9 and laws and regulations that prohibit or discourage health
10 insurers from creating insurance products that provide consumers
11 and businesses greater freedom of choice with greater personal
12 responsibility, by charging premiums that allow discounts for age,
13 occupation, healthy behavior and coverage.

14
15 We urge further study of the role of animal fats and
16 hydrogenated vegetable oils in human health. The VTFB requests
17 that research regarding the positive relationship between intake of
18 dairy products and bone density measurements throughout the
19 human life span be done before any change in the recommended
20 intake of dairy products, particularly of milk as a beverage of
21 choice, during periods of growth. (2012)

22
23 VTFB supports “Fit and Healthy Kids,” an interdepartmental
24 cooperation between the Vermont Department of Health and the
25 Department of Education, with the goal of improving child nutrition
26 by promoting a healthy diet of fresh food from local farms. (2010)

27 VTFB opposes any new payroll taxes to fund any health
28 insurance initiatives. Any health care reform should merge health
29 insurance with workers’ compensation. (2014) (2015)

30

31 **LABOR**

22

32
33 VTFB supports the Worker Compensation report, prepared in
34 2009 by a private sector task force of employers, manufacturers,
35 small businesses and self-employed persons subject to worker
36 compensation. We ask that the Legislature adapt the changes
37 which would improve delivery of service to injured employees,
38 reduce the administrative costs imposed on employers, simplify the

1 claims process and stabilize the program. We also ask that benefits
2 be the same as bordering states to give us a level playing field.
3 (2010)

4
5 VTFB supports subdividing worker compensation class codes
6 to more accurately reflect exposures to employees working in the
7 Vermont equine industry. (2014)

8
9 VTFB continues to support workers' compensation reform
10 initiatives. (2013) to address the need for accessible and affordable
11 workers' compensation insurance in the State of Vermont. (2016)

12
13 VTFB supports the reintroduction of H 867 of 2016 for
14 clarifying and making uniform across all State of Vermont agencies
15 how contract and independent workers are classified for Workers'
16 Compensation, Unemployment Insurance and other employment
17 mandates. Lamoille, Addison, Washington, 2016.

18
19 VTFB supports immigration reform that would allow for the
20 use of migrant workers year round on dairy farms, for a minimum
21 of 3 years and asks that the US Labor Secretary revisit the
22 unfavorable ruling (2012) that did not treat dairy farms the same
23 as sheep farms. (2012).

24
25 VTFB supports that the issue of benefits provided by the
26 Jamaican Central Labor Organization should not risk the future of
27 the H2A program and its successful implementation in Vermont
28 and New England. VTFB further asks that the US Department of
29 Homeland Security continue to permit employer deductions for
30 payments to JCLO. (2012)

31
32 VTFB asks that the Vermont Legislature pass a resolution to
33 urge the US Department of Homeland Security and the US
34 Department of Labor to coordinate efforts that will ensure the
35 reliable and timely issuance of H2A visas for Jamaican and other
36 migrant workers and the predictable supply of high quality labor
37 for Vermont producers. (2012)

38
39 VTFB supports legislation to exempt payment of

1 unemployment benefits to seasonal employees, except during the
2 seasonal period of employment. Further, we oppose any increase in
3 unemployment benefits.

4
5 VTFB opposes inconsistent and heavy-handed enforcement by
6 the INS of cases involving undocumented farm workers. We urge
7 Congress to simplify visa procedures for farm workers, to recognize
8 the human rights of persons who enter this country seeking work
9 and to lessen the penalties against employers who hire foreign
10 workers who possess valid documents and to include a reasonable
11 path to citizenship for those interested laborers. (2008)

12
13 VTFB resolves that Vermont farm employers should not be
14 responsible for the no-match IDs of employees or subject to any
15 penalties as a result. (2007)

16
17 VTFB supports aggressive action to improve the availability of
18 foreign guest workers for dairy and other year-round agricultural
19 operations by:

- 20 1) Urging Congress to create a year-round guest worker
21 category for dairy farm workers, not to include a provision
22 to deport all current immigrants. This category would be
23 determined by a much-simplified determination of need.
24 2) Improving the H2A guest worker program. (2012)

25
26 VTFB strongly encourages a coordinated federal policy that
27 supports the H2A program for seasonal guest workers for orchard,
28 vegetable, fruit and other agricultural operations. (2011)

29
30 VTFB asks the U.S. Department of Labor to clarify child labor
31 laws so that children of parents who are part owners of a farm can
32 work on that farm. (2011)

33
34 **LEGAL/LIABILITY**

23

35
36 VTFB urges the Legislature to minimize the legal tort liability
37 of agricultural businesses as it adds undue costs and is contrary to
38 the public interest.

39

1 VTFB supports legislation to make agritourism providers
2 immune from civil liability for harm sustained by a participant if
3 the harm is the result of an inherent risk in the activity and not
4 gross negligence, intentional misconduct, or recklessness of the
5 provider. (2016)

6
7 VTFB supports protecting private property owners from
8 lawsuits by persons who enter their property with or without
9 permission.

10
11 VTFB urges the Legislature to replace the “willful and wanton
12 misconduct” standard with an “intentional infliction of harm”
13 standard in the so-called Landowner Liability statute.

14
15 Reforms to Landowner Liability Laws should include
16 provisions that protect landowners from injury that is the result of
17 activities associated with the usual and customary practice of
18 farming or forestry. And that the following language be included to
19 further protect private property rights: “The fact that a landowner
20 has permitted use, either implied (by not posting the land) or
21 expressed for recreation purposes, does not establish a claim or
22 right, nor can it be used to establish such a claim by the users.
23 The fact that a landowner has not posted the land, thereby
24 permitting access, shall not limit or preclude the landowner from
25 excluding or limiting trails or uses at any time in the future.”

26
27 VTFB supports a “loser pays” or English Rule statute when a
28 lawsuit is ruled to be “frivolous” by the court.

29
30 VTFB believes that the liability of property owners for injury by
31 livestock or guardian animals be strictly limited to cases of gross
32 and willful negligence.

33
34 The liability of landowners for injuries suffered by the public
35 should be strictly limited except for “intentional infliction of harm,”
36 nor should a landowner be liable for any injury suffered upon a
37 structure erected to comply with a directive from a state or federal
38 agency.

39

1 We support the right of self-defense for property and person.
2 We also support victims of crime being afforded the same rights as
3 criminals and urge amendments to laws and regulations affirming
4 these rights.

5
6 VTFB supports the lawful ownership and use of sporting
7 firearms by private individuals as provided in the Vermont and
8 United States Constitutions.

9
10 **LIVESTOCK** **24**

11
12 VTFB supports the promotion of good animal care practices.

13
14 VTFB supports a code of ethics for livestock shows, and
15 encourages the enforcement by the show superintendent. (2005)

16
17 VTFB believes that any mandatory uniform national livestock
18 ID program should be supported by federal funds. (2005)

19
20 VTFB supports premise registration and other farm-friendly
21 measures that seek to reduce the risk of diseases and other
22 biohazard outbreaks and that in no way burdens or discourages
23 agriculture in the State of Vermont. (2006)

24
25 VTFB supports including non-surgical implantation of
26 embryos as a non-veterinary technique in Vermont veterinary
27 standards.

28
29 VTFB supports legislation allowing trained technicians, with a
30 veterinarian's approval, to implant embryos in farm animals.
31 (2007)

32
33 VTFB requests that the Vermont livestock inspection division
34 create a written, consistent protocol for portable slaughterhouse
35 businesses that would allow these businesses to operate on farms
36 and produce meat that is saleable within the state. (2003)

37
38 VTFB urges the Vermont Livestock Care Standards Advisory
39 Council to review proposed animal welfare legislation and make

1 recommendations to the Legislature based on the Councils review.
2 (2013)

3
4 **MAPLE**

25

5
6 VTFB supports full enforcement of existing Vermont maple
7 statutes by the office of Attorney General (2014) and the Vermont
8 AAFM. (2016)

9
10 We believe that the Vermont maple industry is adequately
11 regulated to insure the highest standards of quality and protect the
12 public health. We also support the free and voluntary registration
13 of sugar makers by county to assist the Vermont AAFM in its work.

14
15 Acknowledging the critical importance of Vermont's maple
16 industry to tourism and our economy, VTFB supports adequate
17 public funding for maple industry research, including the Proctor
18 Maple Research Laboratory.

19
20 VTFB supports the ongoing development of criteria for the use
21 of public lands in Vermont for maple sap harvesting and urges
22 state agencies to cooperate with the Vermont Maple Industry
23 Council in their development.

24
25 VTFB supports a voluntary certification program for maple
26 syrup producers. (2011)

27 **ORGANIC**

26

28
29 VTFB recognizes the advancement of organic agriculture in the
30 state and urges the Vermont State Legislature to support the
31 AAFM, the UVM and the VTC in research and development of
32 organic production techniques. (2005)

33
34 VTFB supports keeping organic standards strictly organic and
35 not allowing some drugs or non-organic feed to be used when
36 retaining a certified organic label. (2013)

37
38 VTFB supports imported organic labeling be subject to the
39 same standards as U.S. organic labeling. (2013)

1 VTFB supports the Organic Materials Review Institute list of
2 approved materials to be the same for the USDA's approved list.
3 (2013)

4
5 VTFB reaffirms the OFPA commitment to soil as the basis for
6 organic certification by the USDA. We request the National Organic
7 Program (NOP) to follow the law and not certify hydroponic as
8 organic without a change in the law. (2016)

9
10 **PLANNING** **27**

11
12 VTFB opposes government acquisition of agricultural lands for
13 uses such as landfills, septic systems and roads as being contrary
14 to the priority of preserving our rural landscape. We support the
15 adoption of a standard definition of "prime agricultural soils"
16 incorporating an analysis of such considerations as critical mass,
17 proximity to adjacent farms, economic viability and farm services.

18
19 We support local, rather than state, decision-making regarding
20 recreation paths, scenic corridors and other land use planning
21 issues.

22
23 VTFB urges its members to serve on local and regional
24 planning and zoning commissions to work to inform and educate
25 these boards on issues of importance to agriculture. We support a
26 simple appeals process at all levels.

27
28 VTFB supports continued exemption from local zoning and Act
29 250 for agricultural improvements. (2006)

30
31 VTFB believes that reducing sprawl should begin with reform
32 of the following existing laws and regulations:

- 33 1) Vermont land gains tax
34 2) On-site septic regulations
35 3) Property taxes on farm land.

36
37 **PROPERTY OWNERS' RIGHTS** **28**

38
39 VTFB supports protection of private property owners' rights

1 embodied in the Constitutions of the United States and the State of
2 Vermont.

3
4 VTFB favors the right of landowners to remove gravel from
5 streams to keep them from flooding and eroding and that this
6 channel management tool is considered as one option when a
7 problem is being assessed. (2010)

8
9 VTFB supports working with the Agency of Transportation and
10 Agency of Natural Resources on a systematic plan to identify where
11 the river channels are located and maintain those channels. (2011)

12
13 Restrictions on the ownership or use of private property by
14 government should be made only in cases of compelling public
15 interest.

16
17 VTFB supports the right of property owners to utilize their
18 property including providing private hunting opportunities,
19 including fenced hunting areas.

20
21 VTFB supports legislation at the federal, state and local levels
22 that would require government agencies to prepare private property
23 impact statements for any new laws or regulations that impair the
24 use, value or other ownership rights of private property. (2016)

25
26 Any rule-making committee, governmental agency or
27 legislative body of federal, state and local authority which enforces
28 rules and regulations which reduces the value of private property
29 shall reimburse the property owner for lost value and the
30 municipality for lost tax revenue. Such decrease in values shall be
31 determined by the local board of civil authority through the tax
32 appeal process and the entity responsible for the loss shall pay the
33 cost.

34
35 VTFB opposes the use of government condemnation powers to
36 seize private property for recreation trails.

37
38 VTFB believes that the right of individual privacy is
39 guaranteed by Article 11 of the Vermont Constitution. Further, we

1 assert that certain decisions of the Vermont Supreme Court are not
2 constitutional and, therefore, we urge that legislation be passed to:

3 1) Insure that private driveways are not considered part of
4 public highways.

5 2) Provide that law enforcement must obtain a court-
6 authorized warrant before undertaking surveillance of any
7 kind of private property whether or not the property is
8 posted or enclosed.

9

10 Ownership of abandoned rights of way should revert to
11 abutting landowners. When a new use is proposed in such rights of
12 way, then a new right of way agreement shall be negotiated. When
13 abandoned rights of way are acquired by government after
14 compensation to the abutting landowners, we urge that all
15 maintenance, including fences, be adequately maintained by
16 government. (2006)

17

18 We support a law to require agencies of government to notify
19 owners of private property by certified mail 30 days before any
20 consideration of any proposed restriction, inclusion of the land in a
21 government inventory, map or plan, or any action that affects the
22 use or value of the property. We urge that all agencies of
23 government respect the right of private property owners to review
24 any such proposals and their right to appeal any decision to a
25 higher authority or the courts, and that violators of the law receive
26 prompt investigation and adjudication.

27

28 VTFB supports legislation to prohibit well head protection
29 areas being created on anyone's property without their written
30 permission. (2013)

31

32 VTFB believes there should be appropriate and immediate
33 enforcement of trespassing laws with penalties to enable and
34 compel law enforcement authorities to assist landowners in
35 protecting property from unwanted trespassers. (2007)

36

37 We believe that private property is private and that
38 governmental officials and the public must obtain permission from
39 property owners before entering private property for any purpose.

1 We support the right of private property owners to post their
2 land.

3
4 VTFB supports the efforts of Vermont Traditions Coalition to
5 make sure that management on public lands is supportive of
6 individual property rights, and to strengthen a coalition of farming,
7 forestry, hunting and outdoor sporting interests. (2003)

8
9 The Vermont Legislature should adopt a law, as urged by the
10 U.S. Supreme Court in *Kelo v. New London*, restricting the use of
11 powers of eminent domain to cases of public necessity. Property
12 taken by eminent domain should be the smallest quantity
13 necessary for the stated use, and should be devoted entirely to
14 public use. Government should never seize property for the
15 purpose of transferring to a second private party. (2010)

16
17 **RECREATION** **29**

18
19 VTFB believes that farm and forestlands are first and foremost
20 for farm and forest production. We acknowledge, however, that
21 many private property owners voluntarily allow public access to
22 their land for recreation of all kinds and for public rights of way
23 and that in return it is fair and reasonable that the following
24 conditions apply to such access:

- 25 1) Property owner permission must be obtained.
- 26 2) Information or data gathered with the voluntary
27 participation of the private property owner belongs first to
28 the property owner who gave permission for any other
29 proposed uses of the data.
- 30 3) The recreational use must be compatible with generally-
31 accepted farm and forest practices.
- 32 4) Signage and informational materials should be made
33 available to recreational users to encourage respect for
34 private property.
- 35 5) Costs of public recreation should be borne by the public.
- 36 6) Private support to help maintain and improve lands
37 allowing public access should be encouraged.

38
39 VTFB supports legislation and regulation

1 that would preserve and facilitate the continued use of public lands
2 including wilderness areas and other specifically designated areas
3 for horse trails, pack and saddle stock animals and other
4 recreational pursuits. (2013)

5

6 **REGULATION**

30

7

8 VTFB supports oversight of agriculture by the Vermont AAFM
9 on all issues affecting agriculture. Further, we support exempting
10 agriculture from Act 250 as being fundamentally in the public
11 interest.

12

13 VTFB supports a change in law with respect to Act 250. For
14 land in which development is proposed to occur that is devoted to
15 agriculture or forest management, any restrictions or conditions
16 placed on the development in order to obtain an Act 250 permit
17 shall apply only to the portion of the property involved in the
18 development, and forestry and agricultural uses can continue
19 without restrictions or encumbrances. (2005)

20

21 VTFB believes that manure pits should not be assumed to be
22 leaking unless that assumption is verified by testing. (2011)

23

24 VTFB supports the use of satellite manure storage (2015).
25 (2016)

26

27 VTFB believes that natural emissions from agriculture should
28 not be regulated under national air quality standards. (2005)

29

30 VTFB strongly supports 24 VSA, SEC 4413 entitled
31 "Limitations on Municipal Bylaws." (2006)

32

33 VTFB favors the right of landowners to have the right to cut
34 their trees in the road right of way without having to get a permit
35 from the town.

36

37 VTFB supports legislative changes creating a statute of
38 limitations of seven (7) years for state subdivision permit violations
39 where such action was not willful and where there is no threat to

1 the public health and safety.

2

3 VTFB recommends that farm enterprises be exempt from the
4 Labor and Industry Public Building permitting requirements if:

5 1) Those enterprises are involved primarily in production,
6 preparation or packaging farm products harvested on the
7 premises.

8 2) There is no substantial public access to the farm
9 buildings other than by farm workers.

10

11 VTFB supports exempting existing gravel pits from Act 250
12 review.

13

14 VTFB favors legislation to streamline the present
15 environmental permitting process by providing more information to
16 permit applicants, and avoiding duplication, unnecessary delays
17 and frivolous appeals.

18

19 VTFB supports expedited approval for communications
20 facilities, including cell towers, which may be based in or upon
21 existing farm structures, or land. (2001)

22

23 VTFB supports maintaining the right of farmers to contract for
24 cell towers on conserved land without penalty. (2002)

25 VTFB supports continuing efforts by the AAFM working with
26 the Department of Environmental Conservation to streamline the
27 burdensome permitting process for slaughterhouses in Vermont.

28

29 We support exempting farms with fewer than 10 employees
30 from OSHA regulations.

31

32 VTFB supports reciprocity for pesticide applicators, if they are
33 certified in a bordering state.

34

35 VTFB supports reciprocity of a well drilling license between
36 Vermont and neighboring states.

37

38 VTFB opposes mitigation of primary ag soils. (2006)

39

1 VFB believes that criterion 9(b) primary ag soils should be
2 eliminated from the Act 250 environmental development law.

3
4 -Replace with: VTFB urges legislators to consider the
5 competitiveness of primary producers by reducing the costs of
6 doing business in Vermont. Insurance, regulatory fees, and taxes
7 should be analyzed for their impact on businesses which maintain
8 open and undeveloped land in the State of Vermont. (2016)

9
10 VTFB supports keeping responsibility for animal cruelty
11 reporting, investigations, and enforcement, on working farms, in the
12 AAFM, who has educated knowledge of accepted animal practices.
13 (2014) (2016)

14
15 VTFB supports the inclusion of farm stands as agricultural
16 buildings, as defined by the state regardless of the amount of sales
17 or whether the land used for production is contiguous to the stand,
18 as long as the stand sells farm products produced by the
19 farmer/farmers. (2015)

20
21 **RIGHT TO FARM AND PRACTICE FORESTRY**

31

22
23 VTFB supports:

- 24 1) The right of Vermont private property owners to produce
25 and market agricultural products in a positive way that
26 promotes Vermont agriculture.
 - 27 2) A farmer's right to choose agricultural methods,
28 including modern technologies, providing that Accepted
29 Agricultural Practices (AAP's) and Accepted Management
30 Practices (AMP's) are practiced. (2011)
 - 31 3) Actions to ensure that farmers be protected from undue
32 liability and nuisance suits when carrying out such
33 practices.
 - 34 4) Informing all purchasers of Vermont property of a private
35 property owner's fundamental "right to farm" within
36 "Required Agricultural Practices."
 - 37 5) The AAFM establishing a variance process in regards to
38 AAPs regulations. (2013)
- 39

1 VTFB supports a right to practice forestry that will relieve
2 landowners from lawsuits for injury from normal forest operations.
3 (2016)

4
5 VTFB should continue efforts to strengthen the state's right to
6 farm law. (2005)(2015)

7
8 VTFB supports only the Secretary of Agriculture, not towns or
9 other municipalities setting the standards for nuisance issues of
10 noise, odor, traffic, flies and other pests on all agricultural
11 operations. (2008)(2015)

12
13 VTFB supports the introduction of legislation that would
14 require that homebuyers who move next to farms be informed that
15 agriculture can be noisy, odiferous, dusty – and that farmers have
16 a right to farm and require developers and real estate agents to
17 inform potential buyers about Vermont's right to farm whenever
18 property changes hands. (2008)

19
20 VTFB supports continuation of the Large and Medium Farm
21 Operation laws with an appropriate level of review by the Vermont
22 AAFM of large livestock operations and the impacts these have on
23 the environment and the community. We will do whatever is
24 necessary to keep all agriculture oversight within the Vermont
25 AAFM. (2011)

26
27 VTFB resolves that commercial farms encroached on by
28 suburban areas should not be subject to regulation under
29 nuisance or noise laws, and that all existing regulatory exemptions
30 for on-going farm operations should be maintained.

31
32 VTFB will continue to have an active role in protecting the
33 Right To Farm; specifically, that all water quality laws be based on
34 solid science, not by politically friendly initiatives. (2014)

35
36 VTFB work with legislators to co-sponsor a bill protecting
37 animal owners from being held criminally liable for any accident
38 caused by any roaming animals that have escaped confinement.
39 (2016)

1 VTFB will ask the legislature to strengthen Vermont’s Right to
2 Farm Law to protect farmers and farm land whose use has been
3 modified, yet still stays within Vermont’s definition of farming.
4 (2016)

5

6 **SEAL OF QUALITY** **32**

7

8 VTFB supports re-institution within the AAFM of a Seal of
9 Quality program for the purpose of promoting Vermont-grown or
10 Vermont-processed foods and food products. Farmers and local
11 food processors should be included in the rule-making and
12 administrative oversight committees under this program. (2013)
13 (2016)

14

15 **SOLID WASTE/RESIDUALS** **33**

16

17 VTFB supports common sense approaches to Vermont’s solid
18 waste problems that come from locally-developed solutions,
19 including marketing of recycled materials and efficient handling of
20 waste collection and transportation. Especially helpful would be
21 simple and clear guidelines for achieving effective waste disposal.
22 We especially support:

- 23 1) development of effective recycling for farm-generated
24 residuals, such as plastics;
- 25 2) allowing farm-generated residuals that are composted on
26 the farm to be done without permits under Required
27 Agricultural Practices;
- 28 3) permitting of composting with guidelines for accepting
29 compostable waste from off a particular farm;
- 30 4) encouragement of businesses assisting farms in disposal
31 of farm residuals. (2013)

32

33 VTFB requests the AAFM return to the position that
34 composting of off-farm food scraps on the farm is a Required
35 Agricultural Practice, as long as the compost is principally used on
36 the farm. (2013)

37

38 **TAXATION - MISCELLANEOUS** **34**

39

1 VTFB favors repeal of inheritance taxes, as they are an unfair
2 second tax on assets which works against future generations
3 continuing family farm operations. Absent outright repeal, we
4 support increasing the federal exemption. (2012)
5

6 VTFB supports Federal Bill #5320, the “Growing Small Farms
7 Act of 2012” which increases the Federal Unemployment tax
8 exemption for agricultural employers from the current \$20,000 per
9 quarter set in 1976, to \$40,000 per quarter. VTFB supports the
10 State of Vermont using the same exemption if the Feds extend
11 theirs. (2012)
12

13 VTFB opposes the sun setting of the current federal estate tax
14 law (\$3.5 million exemption per individual) as it exists in 2010 and
15 asks that the State of Vermont establish a state estate tax
16 exemption the same as the federal. (2013)
17

18 Estate taxes on agricultural and forestland should be based on
19 UVA, rather than on fair market value.
20

21 VTFB supports exempting farms from estate taxes upon death
22 of the owner, as long as the ownership stays within the family.
23 (2011)

24 VTFB supports simplification of the federal tax code. (2011)
25

26 The gift tax exemption should be raised to \$20,000 per person,
27 per year.
28

29 VTFB strongly supports continuation of the retail sales tax
30 exemption for agricultural items, and we oppose local or state taxes
31 on farm machinery used for custom work. (2016)
32

33 VTFB requests the legislature clarify exempt purchases for
34 agricultural uses and that any past purchases be grandfathered in,
35 except in the most egregious of cases. (2014)
36

37 VTFB supports the drafting of legislation that would allow
38 motorized vehicles registered as agricultural vehicles to be exempt
39 from Vermont sales tax. (2005)

1 VTFB opposes the addition of a sales tax to gasoline. (2011)

2
3 VTFB believes that the State of Vermont should eliminate the
4 state capital gains tax on the first \$10,000 on long-term
5 investment.

6
7 VTFB opposes the minimum entity tax on partnerships.

8
9 VTFB believes that college expenses should be deductible
10 expenses on individual tax returns.

11
12 VTFB opposes decoupling the state income tax from the
13 federal income tax.

14
15 VTFB supports a sales tax exemption for building materials
16 used for agricultural construction and/or renovations. (2012)
17 (2013)

18
19 VTFB opposes a federal value-added tax. (2009)

20
21 VTFB supports the rebate of state tax paid on fuel used in
22 vehicles registered with an agricultural plate. (2009)

23 VTFB supports the repeal of the requirement that small
24 businesses issue a 1099 to all vendors and service providers supply
25 more than \$600 of business during a calendar year. (2012)

26
27 VTFB opposes any proposal for a free-standing carbon tax. A
28 tax based on the carbon content of fuel might be entertained to the
29 extent that it replaces all other taxes on fuels, and the proceeds are
30 dedicated to transportation infrastructure in a similar fashion to
31 existing fuel taxes. (2016).

32
33 **TAXATION – PROPERTY 35**

34
35 VTFB supports elimination of the Vermont land gains tax from
36 land sold for agricultural use. (2005)

37
38 VTFB supports UVA for all land growing farm and forest
39 products. This should be Vermont Tax policy, not a program.

1 (2011) (2015) (2016)
2

3 VTFB believes that farm and forest land should not carry the
4 burden of funding education and that residential property should
5 share equally in supporting education.
6

7 VTFB proposes that agricultural structures, including
8 qualified equine structures, be exempt from the property tax.
9

10 VTFB opposes capital gains tax policy that gives a competitive
11 advantage to Land Trusts and Environmental Groups in the
12 purchase of rural land and other property. (2003)
13

14 VTFB supports the Vermont UVA Program and supports the
15 change to have it (Use Value Assessment) become permanent
16 policy that reflects the goal of keeping those who work the land, on
17 the land. (2009, 2014)
18

19 Whereas the state's UVA Program is vitally important to the
20 agricultural producers in this state; VTFB strongly supports
21 Vermont UVA Value Appraisal system and encourages efforts that
22 will improve the integrity and public perceptions about this vitally
23 important system of tax equity. And be it further resolved to
24 encourage better understanding of the vital role that agriculture
25 plays in the state's economy and the role that programs such as
26 UVA play in agriculture's sustainability. (2014)
27

28 VTFB continues to urge the legislature to move the state to a
29 system that utilizes UVA valuation as basic, fair and equal tax
30 assessment policy for all Vermont properties, thereby removing the
31 necessity for any tax liability adjustment program. Ag and Forest
32 land valuation currently using the income approach continue to be
33 set by the UVA Advisory Board. (2015)
34

35 VTFB opposes connecting water quality initiative penalties
36 with the voluntary, contractual UVA program. (2015) (2016)
37

38 UVA land should be able to be posted like any other. (2015)

1 VTFB supports repeal of the most current modification to the
2 UVA Law that unfairly taxes land values at higher rates upon
3 withdrawal. (2015)
4

5 VTFB supports defining equine farm income to include
6 Vermont diverse equine activities such as boarding horses,
7 therapeutic riding, and lessons. (2016)
8

9 VTFB supports an ag-use appraisal system for small-scale ag.
10 (2007)
11

12 VTFB supports permanent continuation of UVA, at values
13 established by the UVA Advisory Board.
14

15 If the present program is changed in any way, we support
16 participants being allowed to exit with no penalty and reducing or
17 removing the penalty on land removed from UVA. We oppose
18 restrictions such as public access without owner permission
19 including the posting of property and urge that:
20

- 21 1) "Potential" and "prospective" be deleted from the
22 definition of appraisal value.
- 23 2) Property assessments should reflect encumbrances and
24 restrictions imposed by law or regulation including
25 easements, Accepted Management Practices, Required
26 Agricultural Practices, EPA regulations and zoning/town
27 plans.
- 28 3) Farm and forest land should be assessed at its ability to
29 produce food and fiber.
- 30 4) Elimination of education taxes on working farm and
31 forest lands. (2002)
- 32 5) Participants in UVA not be disqualified if their lands are
33 operated for the purposes of fee hunting and fishing. (2003)
34

35 VTFB supports the concept that land fully conserved by grants
36 of conservation easements should be valued on the Grand List at
37 use value and not included in the UVA Program. (2010)
38

1 VTFB supports the lien placed against the deed of a UVA
2 Program participant to be considered under law as a binding
3 contract. (2011) (2016)
4

5 VTFB supports that land considered to be developed and
6 withdrawn from the UVA Program by reason of a gift to a relative or
7 employee, the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) shall consist only of the
8 landowner refunding a five-year benefit on the affected deed. (2010)
9

10 VTFB supports existing VTFB policy that excluded land (from
11 the UVA program) should not be appraised as a free-standing parcel
12 in violation of honest appraisal. (2016)
13

14 VTFB supports allowing a landowner in the UVA Program to
15 relocate an undeveloped, withdrawn site of two acres or less, once
16 within an enrolled parcel, without incurring the Land Use Change
17 Tax, provided there is no reduction in the area of enrolled land.
18 (2011)
19

20 VTFB supports an “easy out” (all out) in any UVA legislation
21 that recognizes that the program is a contract between the State of
22 Vermont and the landowner, and that changes should never be
23 made unilaterally without the opportunity for parties to withdraw
24 without penalty. (2011)
25

26 VTFB supports the State of Vermont and its Legislature
27 honoring all contracts in regards to UVA and allowing those who
28 wish to remove enrolled parcels to do so without penalties after the
29 finalization of the new RAPs. (2016)
30

31 VTFB supports the State setting the penalty for land
32 withdrawal from the UVA Program, not the individual Town Listers.
33 (2011)
34

35 VTFB supports establishment of an appeal process within the
36 State Department of Forests and Parks in relation to the UVA
37 Program to allow an appeal of an adverse inspection report before
38 disenrollment from the program. (2012) (2013)
39

1 **TOURIST INFORMATION**

36

2

3 VTFB supports tourist information signage policy that is fair to
4 all businesses. 2016

5

6 VTFB should work closely with the AAFM to develop signage
7 for state highways to direct the public to agricultural businesses
8 and destinations.

9

10 VTFB supports changes in Vermont’s sign laws to:

- 11 1) Provide that signs must be a minimum of 6 feet off the
- 12 traveled portion of the highway and not out of the right of
- 13 way.
- 14 2) Clarify the definition of “premises” to mean land owned or
- 15 leased by the farmer.
- 16 3) Allow temporary signs outside the confines of one’s own
- 17 property with written permission.

18

19 VTFB urges increased State support for efforts to promote
20 tourism and the sale of agricultural products. (2011)

21

22 **TRANSPORTATION**

37

23

24 VTFB asks the appropriate authorities to develop agricultural
25 highway signage which warns motorists that they are in a farming
26 area and to be on the alert for agricultural hazards. (2016)

27

28 VTFB supports sufficient resources be allocated to maintain a
29 strong transportation infrastructure that will also support the
30 movement of agricultural products in our region. (2007)

31

32 VTFB supports a waiver from interstate weight limits for
33 trucks with agricultural or forestry products. (2009)

34

35 VTFB supports authorizing properly-configured trucks hauling
36 agricultural or forestry materials to operate at weights up to
37 97,000 pounds on any interstate highway. We urge the Vermont
38 Congressional Delegation to make permanent the temporary waiver
39 of lower weight limits granted to Vermont for calendar 2010. (2010)

1 VTFB supports a thorough revision of DOT rules affecting
2 truck weights, axle configurations, safety improvements in truck
3 design, and other technical issues, especially to make possible easy
4 interstate and international commerce. (Lamoille 2015)

5
6 VTFB would like to impress upon the state Department of
7 Transportation that Vermont farmers and other business using our
8 rail system are at an economic disadvantage to other businesses in
9 neighboring states because Vermont cannot handle rail cars
10 weighing 286,000lb which is considered a national guide thus
11 considerably increasing freight rates to Vermonters (Bennington
12 2015)

13
14 VTFB opposes legislation that creates an unreasonable
15 hardship on an agritourism business or farm stand that must use
16 an existing railroad crossing. (2008) (2016)

17
18 VTFB supports that the state statutes provide the right to safe
19 access for all agricultural practices and the right to public access
20 to sell agricultural products (including, but not limited to, dairy
21 products, agronomic, maple syrup, horticulture and forestry)
22 across railroad crossings. (2009) (2016)

23
24 VTFB supports all farming activities involving a railroad
25 crossing shall be grandfathered as of 1/1/2009. (2008) (2016)

26
27 VTFB requests the railroads identify all farm railroad crossings
28 and report same to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. (2008)

29
30 VTFB supports the unrestricted right of vehicles involved in
31 natural resource industries to travel Vermont roads and highways
32 consistent with the public health and safety. Specialized equipment
33 used to apply materials to crops or to harvest crops should be
34 considered agricultural vehicles for the purpose of registration and
35 permits.

36
37 VTFB supports a mechanism that enables farmers and custom

1 operators to purchase highway diesel fuel tax-free at the point of
2 purchase. (2006)

3
4 VTFB supports allowing tandem trailers on interstate
5 highways. We also support permitting trucks with agricultural or
6 forest product overweight permits authority to use interstate
7 highways, where feasible to substantially shorten trips. (2006)

8
9 VTFB supports increased Vermont Highway department focus
10 on needed repair and maintenance on state highways and bridges.
11 (Franklin 2015)

12
13 VTFB recommends that interstate highways allow the same
14 weight limits that are presently allowed on secondary highways.

15
16 VTFB supports increased Vermont Highway department focus
17 on repair and maintenance of right of way fences along the
18 Interstate system bordering land where animals are actively being
19 pastured, not only for the safety of motorists, but also to fulfill the
20 promise made to landowners when the system was built. (2013)

21 VTFB supports legislation to provide reciprocal agreements,
22 regulations and laws for truck travel between all New England
23 states and New York State.

24
25 VTFB supports cooperation between town and state highway
26 officials and local farmers to develop reasonable solutions to
27 problems such as left-hand turns by farm machinery. We support
28 educating drivers about slow-moving vehicle signs in driver's
29 manuals and public information campaigns.

30
31 VTFB supports continued improvement of U.S. Route 2 as the
32 primary east-west corridor through northern New England.

33
34 VTFB supports a sales tax exemption on trucks registered as
35 agricultural. (2007)

36
37 VTFB supports the availability of natural gas for cars and
38 trucks.

39

1 VTFB supports continuation of the weight limit exemption of
2 ag service vehicles (feed, fertilizers and ag trucks). (2005)

3
4 VTFB encourages a cooperative effort between the farming
5 community and Vermont law enforcement to improve awareness,
6 understanding and voluntary compliance regarding laws that
7 regulate flying debris from mobile equipment. (2003)

8
9 VTFB supports not including incidents involving farm tractors
10 on drivers' records when the farmer/employee is not at fault.
11 (2003)

12
13 VTFB believes that when a farmer delivers product processed
14 on the farm for retail sale in his own truck, he should not be
15 required to meet CDL or hours of service requirements. (2006)

16
17 **WATER QUALITY/AAPs/RAPs** **39**

18
19 VTFB opposes the rulemaking of the Clean Water Restoration
20 Act (HR2421) of 2007 that would provide regulatory authority to
21 the Environmental Protection Agency over all water and would
22 require the enforcement of Clean Water Act requirements. (2007)

23
24 VTFB supports an educational outreach effort to encourage
25 farmers to learn about and comment on the proposed Vermont
26 Confined Animal Feeding Operation rules. (2012)

27
28 VTFB opposes state or federal designation of ground water as
29 a public trust. (2006)

30
31 VTFB supports the right of private property owners to repair
32 flood damage with prompt permission from NRCS with no lengthy
33 permit process and to remove gravel from streams without yard
34 limits in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers.

35
36 VTFB supports easing restrictions to allow landowners to keep
37 the water channels and stream banks clear so that the 100-year
38 flood stage does not turn from the 100-year flood to a 30- or 15-
39 year flood where bridges become dams, causing homes to become

1 isolated from emergency care and fire protection. (2011)

2

3 VTFB opposes inclusion of state rivers in the federal Wild and
4 Scenic River program. Further, we urge that buffer zones adjacent
5 to major rivers in Vermont not be larger than 25 feet, unless an
6 easement is purchased from the landowner so affected. Land set
7 aside in buffer strips should be excluded from property taxation,
8 since its economic use has been excluded.

9

10 VTFB resolves that the 25-foot buffer requirement be
11 maintained and only required on waterways with year-round
12 running water. (2008)

13

14 VTFB urges Lake Champlain Basin Committee to redirect
15 funding from such efforts as implementing a TMDL analysis and
16 watershed planning. The committee should focus on implementing
17 solutions to known causes of phosphorous runoff, including urban
18 and suburban sources. (2001)

19

20 VTFB supports continued funding for the implementation of
21 BMP's. VFB further supports having the Vermont AAFM make
22 available matching funds to all types of farming for non-point
23 source water pollution control. Funds should be available for any
24 farm construction of pollution control and containment equipment
25 or structures. (2010)

26

27 VTFB opposes any attempt to assess fees for water withdrawal
28 for recreational, commercial, municipal or agricultural use. (2001)

29

30 VTFB strongly opposes any Small Farm Regulation Bill similar
31 to House Bill #586 (2013-2014 biennium). If water quality issues
32 are the motivation for such bills, VTFB encourages outreach and
33 funding to help implement changes in farming practices in relation
34 to water quality before enforcing and developing any mandates and
35 regulations. (2014)

36

37 VTFB supports establishing a committee of qualified
38 Agricultural, Industrial, as well as other industry stake holders to
39 guide officials in determining changes to any Federal Water Quality

1 Standards, Laws or Rules. (2014)

2

3 VTFB opposes connecting water quality initiative penalties
4 with the voluntary, contractual UVA program. (2015)

5

6 VTFB supports the development of free market contracts for
7 water quality amelioration to allow cooperative solutions agreed to
8 among responsible parties. (2015)

9

10 VTFB recommends that the EPA’s recently redefined rule titled
11 “Waters of the US” be repealed, and that individual parts of the rule
12 be debated in Congress. (2015)

13

14 VTFB supports the RAPs regarding partial exclusion of livestock
15 from Vermont’s Waters of the State, but wants it to go no further
16 toward permanently excluding livestock from the Vermont’s Waters
17 of the State. (2016)

18

19 **WETLANDS**

40

20

21 VTFB strongly supports the NRCS as the sole agency for
22 agricultural wetland issues and delineations. We support hay land
23 being included in the delineation of crops for the purpose of
24 establishing prior converted wetlands. We oppose the NRCS being
25 part of any other national agency than the USDA.

26

27 VTFB strongly objects to the heavy-handed manner in which
28 the existing rules and regulation regarding wetlands are
29 interpreted and enforced.

30

31 VTFB calls for aggressive pursuit of existing AFBF policies on
32 wetlands.

33

34 We urge the state and federal government to implement a
35 definition based on sound scientific evidence of protected wetlands
36 which does not include artificially-created farm ponds, beaver
37 dams or drainage ditches and to clarify wetlands regulations to
38 ensure that land which is defined as wetlands is wet, i.e.

1 completely saturated for at least a majority of days in the growing
2 season in a year of average rainfall. Land which is dry for the
3 majority of the growing season in a year of average rainfall should
4 not be classified as wetland.

5
6 VTFB supports the conversion of insignificant, Class 2
7 wetlands for agricultural purposes by the granting of general use
8 permits. (2001)

9
10 VTFB believes that private property owners be fairly
11 compensated when restrictions are placed on private wetlands.
12 (2007)

13
14 VTFB supports the current definition of wetlands in Vermont
15 state law Title 10, Chapter 37 Section 902(5). "Wetlands" means
16 those areas of the state that are inundated by surface or
17 groundwater with a frequency sufficient to support significant
18 vegetation or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally
19 saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Such areas
20 include, but are not limited to, marshes, swamps, sloughs,
21 potholes, fens, river and lake overflows, mud flats, bogs and ponds,
22 but excluding such areas as grow food or crops in connection with
23 farming activities. (2007)

24
25 **WILDLIFE**

41

26
27 VTFB believes that the designation of the entire Connecticut
28 River Watershed as the Silvio Conte National Refuge has serious
29 implications for farming and forestry. We support efforts that
30 would:

- 31 1) Remove farm and forest land from the refuge.
- 32 2) Address the concerns of landowners and private property
33 owners.
- 34 3) Protect agricultural and forestry operations in the
35 watershed from adverse impacts of refuge activities.
- 36 4) Coordinate activities of the Farm Bureaus of Vermont,
37 New Hampshire, Connecticut and Massachusetts to address
38 these concerns.
- 39 5) Restrict the introduction or reintroduction of any plant or

1 animal species onto state- or federal-owned land in the
2 Conte refuge.

3
4 VTFB recommends that there be moose nuisance and damage
5 legislation that provides compensation to the victim, including the
6 option of the moose itself.

7
8 VTFB recommends that 10% of the moose permits be issued to
9 resident applicants of the management unit in which the moose
10 hunt is to be held. We support legislation that would allow the legal
11 taking of a moose, turkey, deer or bear which is causing damage to
12 crops, fences, agricultural structures or other valuable property by
13 the property owner or his designee on their property. (2003) and to
14 increase the season length and number of turkeys to be taken each
15 year. (2013)

16
17 We urge that the AFBF oppose the authority of the U.S. Fish
18 and Wildlife Service to enforce the Endangered Species Act.

19
20 VTFB supports the right of farmers to protect land and assets
21 on the farm from damage caused by beavers on or off their own
22 land. This is accomplished through directing jurisdiction to the
23 Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife that shall respond to
24 landowner requests, provide a solution to the problem and resolve
25 landowner disputes. (2002)

26
27 VTFB supports regular application of lampricide to Vermont
28 streams or rivers feeding Lake Champlain. (2011)

29
30 **WORLD TRADE**

42

31
32 VTFB supports a level playing field for imports of meat, dairy
33 and other agricultural products, including policy that would:

- 34 1) Apply U.S. domestic standards for safety, quality and
35 labeling.
36 2) Levy duties to offset foreign subsidies.
37 3) Implement country of origin labeling.
38 4) Mandate use of ingredient contents in accounting for
39 import quotas for food products.

1 5) Apply an assessment on all imported dairy products for
2 dairy promotion equivalent to that paid on domestic
3 products.

4 6) Charge \$1.00 per head for beef promotion, including all
5 imported beef to be distributed in the U.S.

6
7 The United States should not allow imports of animal products
8 from nations harboring foot and mouth disease or from countries
9 that receive and transship such products. (2011)

10
11 VTFB encourages the development and support of federal and
12 state programs that enhance the ability of private and cooperative
13 businesses to export farm products, including value-added
14 products such as dairy. New entrants into the export market
15 should be encouraged, rather than stifled, as under current USDA
16 rules. Specifically, USDA should revoke the rule that requires
17 previous export experience.

18
19 VTFB supports the prohibition of any imported milk protein
20 concentrate (MPC), any blend of MPC and nonfat milk powder or
21 any blend of nonfat milk powder and any dairy protein. VTFB
22 supports maintaining dairy quotas presently in place and not
23 allowing any further importation of dairy products from any
24 country. (2009) 2016

25
26 The United States should not allow dairy products that require
27 U.S. Grade A sanitary standards to be imported from nations
28 lacking Grade A-inspection of their dairy farms, milk
29 transportation systems and dairy processing plants. (2005)

30
31 VTFB backs the effort to classify milk protein concentrates
32 (MPC) as a dairy product and have tariffs and promotion fees
33 applied. (2003)

34
35 VTFB supports agricultural reciprocity with all nations,
36 provided these nations have the same regulations on health and
37 safety of the food. (2010)

38
39 **Internal Resolutions**

1
2 VTFB Board of Directors shall appoint a Vice Resolutions Chair.
3
4 VTFB commends the staff for doing an outstanding job.
5
6 VTFB recommends that its Executive Committee study the
7 opportunity of offering legal counsel as a membership tool.
8
9 VTFB directs the Executive Committee for a motion of appreciation
10 regarding Remi Bourdeau and his passing and for Bourdeau
11 Brothers Inc. support of agriculture since 1974.

12
13 FN To Page Forestry Section:
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