

1 **FOREWORD**

2

3 **Purpose of Vermont Farm Bureau**

4 Vermont Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary
5 organization of the families of farmers and foresters united for the purpose of
6 improving the net income of its members and preserving Vermont's rural quality
7 of life. The mission of Vermont Farm Bureau is to serve and advance Vermont
8 agriculture.

9

10 Members come together to analyze their problems and formulate action
11 to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social
12 advancement and, thereby, to promote the national well being.

13

14 Vermont Farm Bureau is a member of the American Farm Bureau
15 Federation, a national organization of farmers and ranchers in all 50 states and
16 Puerto Rico. The positions expressed in these pages represent Vermont Farm
17 Bureau's views on various issues as they relate to Vermont. The positions of the
18 national Farm Bureau organization collectively are expressed through the
19 American Farm Bureau Federation.

20

21 Farm Bureau is local, county, state, national and international in its
22 scope and influence and is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character.
23 Farm Bureau is the voice of agricultural producers of all kinds, all sizes and all
24 levels as determined by its members.

25

26 **AGRICULTURE, GENERAL**

1

27 A strong and prosperous agricultural economy is vital to Vermont's
28 rural quality of life. We urge that the economic viability of Vermont's agricultural
29 industry be paramount as public policies are formulated. In this regard, Vermont
30 Farm Bureau specifically supports:

- 31 1) Use Value assessment of all farm and productive forestland.
- 32 2) Voluntary sale or transfer of development rights.
- 33 3) Reducing capital gains and inheritance taxes.
- 34 4) Increasing investment tax credits.
- 35 5) Cost/benefit evaluation of all environmental and land use
36 regulation.
- 37 6) Compensation to landowners for any reduction in land value
38 caused by law or governmental regulation
- 39 7) "Right to farm" protection for statutorily defined agricultural
40 operations.

- 1 8) Strengthening and diversifying value-added processing of
- 2 agricultural products.
- 3 9) Efforts to educate and inform the public on ways farmers provide
- 4 stewardship for the land.
- 5 10) The development and implementation of a long-term national
- 6 farm policy.

7
8 We strongly support groups, organizations and institutions which help
9 strengthen Vermont agriculture.

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports that local USDA committees,
12 particularly FSA and NRCS, should consist of farmers who are elected by local
13 farmers. And, these farmers should maintain leadership roles in boards and
14 committees that have direct oversight of their business practices. (2010)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages increased funding by the USDA in
17 the form of low interest loans and grants to be used for a variety of alternative
18 manure management practices. (2005)

19
20 The Vermont Farm Bureau is concerned about the future of UVM
21 Extension. The VFB recommends that extension restore as its mission, a solid
22 commitment to address the concerns of the working farm and forest community.
23 (2009)Vermont Farm Bureau supports UVM and VTC maintaining their dairy
24 herds and barns for the purpose of hands on experiential student learning in all
25 phases of farming. (2007)

26
27 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the University of Vermont to
28 establish a farm research center that is of a sufficient size and structure to do
29 meaningful and scientific research that could be utilized by commercial dairy
30 farms.

31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports adequate funding of the University of
32 Vermont Extension System and we offer our support to maintain its specialized
33 ability to work with the agricultural and rural communities, particularly in subject
34 areas and localities not serviced by other agencies. (2007)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports agricultural enterprises of any size or
37 commodity using traditional or non-traditional methods that serve small or large
38 markets. We support all agricultural production, including organic provided that
39 the producer follows Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP's) or Accepted
40 Management Practices (AMP's) for forestland.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports full funding of the FAP
2 (FarmAgronomics Practices) program. (2010)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports funding the Vermont Agrability
5 Project, a joint venture between UVM Extension and Vermont Center for
6 Independent Living to assist disabled farmers to continue active and productive
7 lives on the farm. (2010)

8
9 Acknowledging its "land grant" origins, we support all efforts of the
10 University of Vermont to strengthen Vermont agriculture and urge UVM
11 leadership to be guided in key policy decisions by its agricultural heritage.
12 Further, we believe that the University of Vermont should:

- 13 1) Make the educational needs of Vermonters its first priority.
- 14 2) Expand and improve the four-year agricultural program at an
15 affordable tuition.
- 16 3) retain the title of the agricultural school in perpetuity and keep
17 Vermont's agricultural community as its primary focus.

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the University of Vermont to reaffirm
20 Vermont's agricultural heritage of working forests by reattaining their
21 accreditation by the Society for American Foresters. (2010)

22
23 We urge the legislature to appropriate adequate funding with a
24 minimum annual stipend of \$200,000 to support county fairs and field days.

25
26 We encourage active participation in Vermont's county fairs and field
27 days by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Furthermore, we
28 urge that sufficient resources be allocated by the Agency on an annual basis to
29 maintain a first-class Vermont Building at the Eastern States Exposition (the "Big
30 E") to both underline the importance of agriculture in Vermont and educate the
31 general public on Vermont's agriculture heritage and industry.

32
33 Vermont Farm Bureau supports keeping the Vermont Farm Show in
34 Barre.

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued research concerning
37 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program to determine the
38 program's practicality and profitability for all types of farming. We support more
39 educational programs emphasizing innovative ways of farming but oppose laws
40 mandating the use of these practices.

1 The Vermont Farm Bureau should ask the general assembly and the
2 administration; working with the insurance industry, to study and report on
3 insurance issues facing Vermont farm enterprises as well as possible solutions to
4 those problems in order to further increase productivity and safety on Vermont
5 farms. (2005)

6

7 **AGRICULTURE AGENCY**

2

8 Vermont Farm Bureau supports cooperation between the Vermont
9 Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the University of Vermont and other
10 institutions with laboratory facilities to assure that the Vermont agricultural
11 community has access to laboratory facilities (such as diagnostic and pathology) for
12 agricultural science issues including animal health, public health, seed and feed,
13 and fertilizer.

14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends the inclusion of the Department of
16 Forests, Parks and Recreation into the Agency of Agriculture. (2003)

17

18 Vermont Farm Bureau recognizes that the Agency of Agriculture
19 supports the largest industry in this state and requires the necessary resources to
20 maintain its leadership and regulatory oversight.

21

22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Agency of Agriculture in
23 maintaining all oversight and enforcement of regulations regarding permitting,
24 environmental regulations and inspections of farms and to allow time for current
25 regulations to realize their potential. (2009)

26

27 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Agency of Agriculture's AAP's
28 (Accepted Agricultural Practices Regulations), the definition of "farming" in 10
29 VSA 6001 (22), and the definition of "farm system" in 30 VSA 219a. These should
30 be used to define an agricultural operation by all State agencies. (2010)

31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports making the Secretary of Agriculture,
33 Food and Markets (or his or her designee) a permanent member of the University
34 of Vermont's Board of Trustees. (2008)

35

36 **ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES**

3

37 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to control the use of all
38 terrain vehicles. We favor compensation to property owners for damage done by
39 ATV's and appropriate fines for negligent operation. We support ongoing

1 educational efforts to inform the general public of its responsibility to respect
2 private property and landowner rights.

3

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

7

8 **BIOTECHNOLOGY**

4

9 Vermont Farm Bureau, recognizing the importance of biotechnology to
10 the future economic well being of the state, encourages funding efforts to develop
11 biotech industries.

12

13 We oppose placing prohibitions or undue restrictions on the
14 development of biotechnology products which have been deemed safe and
15 effective by appropriate regulatory agencies. Further, we oppose creating lists of
16 users of agricultural biotechnology, which may target users unfairly.

17

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

22

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

29

30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports unbiased, scientifically based
31 evaluations concerning human and animal safety and wholesomeness, as well as
32 the environmental impacts of biotechnology and the right of farmers to use these
33 products based on these evaluations. (2003)

34

35 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the right of individual farmers to use
36 modern technology in farming practices. (2010)

37

38

39

40

1 **COMMODITIES**

5

2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation and improvement of the
3 Vermont state meat inspection program under the direction of the Vermont
4 Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. We support national legislation to
5 allow meat inspected under the Vermont program to be sold in interstate
6 commerce. We support a meat grading system to be implemented, which will
7 enable livestock producers to expand their market. We encourage the Vermont
8 Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to continue to promote local and
9 regional markets for Vermont livestock raised for slaughter.

10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a change on Vermont Statutes that
12 would remove game birds from the “amenable species” list, which would allow
13 exempt status for “approved source” slaughtering facilities for the processing of
14 game birds only. (2010)

15

16 Vermont Farm Bureau urges passage of legislation which eases
17 the federal inspection process required for interstate shipment of meat which
18 already passes standards.

19

20 Vermont Farm Bureau urges increased support for dairy beef by the
21 Beef Promotion Board.

22

23 We believe that cattle sold for less than fifty dollars, or weighing less
24 than one hundred pounds, or sold for dairy purposes should be exempt from the
25 beef promotion check-off.

26

27 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes vertical integration, when it
28 substantially reduces market competition in the beef industry. (2006)

29

30 We urge that the American Farm Bureau Federation request that the
31 Congress and appropriate regulatory agencies monitor commodity markets to
32 prevent price manipulation and promote an unencumbered free market for
33 agricultural products.

34

35 Vermont Farm Bureau supports local growers supplying local markets
36 and will work in a leadership role with the Vermont Retail Association and the
37 Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to develop an infrastructure to
38 promote local products.

39

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

4
5 Funds for disaster relief and crop failure payments should be paid
6 directly to the affected farmer and may also apply to a landowner if it is
7 determined that the land had lost functional or marketable value as a result of the
8 disaster. Qualification for disaster relief should be extended to isolated individual
9 events instead of requiring whole county designations. (2001)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the concept of payment limitations for
12 federal farm programs when program funds do not meet the needs of all eligible
13 producers. Payments should be targeted / pro-rated to serve the maximum
14 number of farmers. (2001)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Congress to provide adequate funding
17 for school breakfast and lunch programs offering the choice of whole milk with all
18 perishable food products to be served at proper temperatures. We support
19 programs such as the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program and the Special
20 Milk Program.

21
22 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the continuation of the Vermont
23 "Farm to Family" coupon program because it is beneficial to farmers and needy
24 families.

25
26 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the expansion of the "Farm to Family"
27 program for producer only farmers markets to include eggs, meat and dairy.(2007)

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau supports use of locally produced food in school
30 lunch programs. (2002)

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the mandatory pasteurization of apple
33 cider.

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau will lobby the State of Vermont to make
36 Vermont wines available for purchase and/or consumption at those state
37 properties which have state liquor licenses and to make such term or condition
38 mandatory for all future contracts with concessionaires seeking to operate under
39 contract with the State on these state properties.

40

1 **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

6

2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports including trucks with gross vehicle
3 weights of one ton or more and agricultural equipment under Vermont's lemon
4 law statute.

5

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

9

10 Vermont Farm Bureau requests that produced or processed foods
11 should have a Country of Origin label. (2008)

12

13 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the same regulatory and safety
14 standards required for domestically grown products be required for imported
15 products in order to protect consumer safety and prevent economic advantages.
16 (2008)

17

18 **CROP AND LIVESTOCK PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT** 7

19 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that pesticide regulation and
20 pesticide monitoring programs remain in the control of the Agency of Agriculture,
21 Food and Markets. (2009)

22

23 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the United States Department of
24 Agriculture to set standards for testing of chemical fertilizers and chemical crop
25 protection agents for heavy metals and other pollutants to protect farmers and
26 other consumers who use these products.

27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that in the finding of fact concerning
29 restriction of insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides or herbicides under the Food
30 Quality Protection Act (FQPA), appellant should be required to show actual harm
31 rather than calculated potentials.

32

33 We urge that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enact the
34 Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) the way congress intended. Congress should
35 monitor FQPA implementation vigorously to ensure compliance with legislative
36 intent.

37

38

39

40

2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the innovative development of new
3 dairy products and a way to profitably market these products in a national and
4 international market. (2010)

5

6 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the domestic production of milk and
7 dairy based products that are currently being imported into the United States.
8 (2010)

9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports working with cooperatives and other
10 agencies to retain the Federal milk Market Order system. We oppose any
11 reclassification of reconstituted milk under the Federal Order program. Vermont
12 Farm Bureau supports reform to the price discovery mechanism for classified
13 pricing. (2010)

14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves to work with dairy cooperatives in
16 supporting key issues and policies being developed in the Vermont legislature.
17 (2010)

18 Vermont Farm Bureau supports dairy supply management initiatives
19 such as the CWT program (Cooperatives Working Together). (2010)

20

21 Vermont Farm Bureau supports dairy supply management initiatives,
22 including mandatory, that will assist in creating greater price stability. We support
23 a state, national and industry supported, long term counter cyclical program
24 addressing the volatility in milk pricing that will provide for the viability of the
25 dairy industry . Any program should recognize the need for regional production
26 of milk for food security purposes. Further, any program should recognize the
27 variability of significant input costs, WTO compliance, and reflect the true value of
28 surplus milk. (2010)

29

30 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that national dairy policy include:
31 1) an increase in solids not fat (SNF) minimum standards in fluid milk
32 to match the California standards.
33 2) a promotion assessment equivalent to the domestic promotion
34 assessment levied on all imported products and commodities.
35 3) the Milk Income Loss Program MILC or its equivalent as a safety
36 net.
37 4) an extension of the concept of Interstate Dairy Compacts to other
38 areas of the United States and maintaining regional supplies of fresh
39 milk in the interest of consumers and national security.

1 5) strong support for the system of classified pricing of milk based on
2 use. (2010)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the continuance of the Federal Support
5 Program, and the MILC Program as a part of or as a choice in a more
6 comprehensive reform program. (2010)

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

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the decrease of the industry somatic
13 cell count in fluid milk from dairy cows to 400,000 cells/ml to be competitive with
14 New Zealand, Europe and Australia in the global marketplace. (2009)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports including yogurt as an eligible dairy
17 product in the supplemental program for women, infants and children. (2010)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages Milk Promotion Committees to
20 facilitate placement of milk vending machines in schools adjacent to lunch areas.
21 Vermont Colleges should also be encouraged to promote dairy sales through
22 placement of vending machines throughout their buildings. (2010)

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that milk vending machines purchased
25 with milk promotion money should be filled exclusively with dairy products as
26 defined by Vermont statute. (2006)

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

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the use of raw milk in the production
33 of cheese aged over sixty days. (2009)

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau should ask the Vermont Legislature to amend
36 current law to require all raw milk be tested commensurate with accepted risk, and
37 that the producers be inspected the same as commercial farms. (2008)

38
39 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any changes to the Capper-Volstead Act that
40 allows farmers to market milk collectively without violating antitrust laws. (2007)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a request that the Vermont Agency of
2 Agriculture get the price of milk in the Boston milk shed 25 years ago and what
3 that would equate to in today's dollar, and publish it in AgriView and on their web
4 site. (2009)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports truth in labeling that only beverages
7 produced by mammals be labeled as "milk". (2010)

8

9 **DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS**

9

10 Recognizing the complexity of contracts for the sale or lease of
11 development rights, we urge that all agreements contain specific time frames with
12 a defined date of commencement and termination not to exceed 25 years in length
13 with all easements and rights reverting to the original grantor or successor upon
14 expiration of the contract. (2003)

15

16 In the event that public funds are used to purchase development rights,
17 we believe that the following principles should apply to the purchase.

- 18 1) Fair market value shall be paid to the landowner.
- 19 2) The land should be economically viable after the development rights
20 are removed.
- 21 3) All tax obligations should be fully disclosed and explained prior to
22 purchase.
- 23 4) Any restrictions on use of the land should be clear and limited in
24 order to maintain a viable working landscape and allow traditional
25 uses as well as innovative agricultural uses, such as farm stands, bed
26 and breakfasts, recreation, etc. for profit. (2003)
- 27 5) Agreements should not restrict any new farming methods,
28 technology or the ability to diversify or change into other types of
29 agriculture such as ag tourism. (2001)

30

31 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that property with development rights
32 removed should be taxed at its productive agricultural or forestry value and the
33 state Division of Property Valuation and Review should publish and distribute
34 guidelines to assist local listers in equitably assessing these restricted lands.

35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Vermont young farmers and anyone
37 interested in agricultural opportunities to use the resources of the Vermont Land
38 Trust, Vermont Land Link and other similar organizations to pursue farming
39 opportunities.

40

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

6

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

10

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

12 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the livestock industry to adopt a
13 nationwide Johnes disease program to protect the health of farm animals, farm
14 families and the public and to maintain public confidence in beef and dairy
15 markets.

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuous appropriations from the
17 Vermont Legislature to study, educate and train the agricultural community about
18 Johnes Disease. (2010)

19

20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the removal of the responsibility for
21 licensing and regulation of pet shops from the State Veterinarian. (2002)

22

23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports preventative programs for chronic
24 infectious diseases of dairy cattle including foot and mouth disease, BSE (bovine
25 spongiform encephalitis), tuberculosis and brucellosis to provide vaccination and
26 control programs as necessary through a combination of private and public
27 funding, including adequate funding for the Vermont state vet's office within the
28 Agency of Agriculture, and that all such measures should be considered part of an
29 overall national security initiative. (2001)

30

31 We support a diverse and healthy wildlife population in Vermont.
32 Vermont Farm Bureau actively supports state, regional and national policies that
33 recognize that farm animals and agricultural crops are at least as important as
34 wildlife. However, when wildlife populations pose threats to agriculture or
35 humans we urge that management policies recognize the priority of protecting
36 both public safety and the economic viability of agricultural enterprises from
37 diseases such as rabies, giardia and distemper. Further, we urge that policies
38 protect agriculture from predators which cause economic harm and threaten crops
39 and domestic animals.

40

1 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends the Vermont Fish and Wildlife
2 Department pay farmers for proven losses to dairy cattle, beef cattle and sheep
3 from coyote attacks: suggested compensation \$1800.00 dairy cows; \$1000.00 beef
4 cows; \$300.00+ pro-rated for young stock; \$200.00 adult sheep; \$100.00+ lambs and
5 older lambs pro-rated. Plus institute a \$100.00 bounty on coyotes until the
6 populations are controlled. (2010)

7
8 Vermont Farm Bureau supports livestock and crop producer's right to
9 shoot predators and other nuisance wildlife at baited locations using lighting with
10 prior notification of wildlife officials.

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any law or regulation prohibiting the
13 use of steel traps including leg hold traps for capturing predators, varmints or fur
14 bearing animals.

15
16

17 **EDUCATION**

11

18 Vermont Farm Bureau should ask UVM and all land grant colleges to
19 require all students to take a course offered by the College of Agriculture that
20 covers issues such as how food is produced, what is required for inputs, and how
21 much land is needed to feed the world in a fair and balanced way. (2008)

22

23 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves that the governor appoint at least one active
24 farmer to the University of Vermont Board of Trustees. (2010)

25

26 Vermont Farm Bureau supports controlling the increasing cost of
27 education. (2006)

28

29 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Vermont Department of Education to
30 recognize the importance of agricultural knowledge at the elementary, secondary
31 and post secondary levels and provide both financial and technical support for
32 Agriculture in the Classroom program.

33

34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports agricultural and natural resource
35 education and establishing agricultural and natural resource education programs
36 at regional technical centers and High Schools. (amended 2008) The Vermont
37 Department of Education shall continue to support the FFA agricultural advisor
38 position. (2003, 2005)

39

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports and encourages agriculture education
2 in the classroom and the use of local farm products in our schools. (2009)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the Vermont Department of
5 Education to fund the state FFA advisor position. (2006)

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that the American Farm Bureau
8 promote education about the benefits of consuming fresh and whole foods as an
9 increasingly important part of domestic agricultural policy. (2006)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau urges congress to appropriate funds to support
12 the Perkins bill. This legislation provides student loan relief incentive for
13 veterinary students to go into large animal practice that supports agricultural
14 infrastructure. (2006)

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

19
20 We urge creation of an accredited four-year professional development
21 course on agriculture for Vermont teachers funded with public and/or private
22 funds. Further, To facilitate such “Ag in the Classroom” initiatives as the Learning
23 Barns, we call for the establishment of a permanent clearinghouse for the collection
24 and distribution of curriculum materials and educational resources on agriculture
25 including videos, computer software, Internet sites and farm tour information to be
26 staffed collaboratively by the Vermont Department of Education and the Vermont
27 Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. We encourage County Farm Bureaus to
28 coordinate local farm tours for local school children. (amended 2005)

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

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

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the creation of an apprenticeship
2 program to train slaughterhouse personnel by the University of Vermont (UVM),
3 Vermont Technical College (VTC), vocational centers or any combination thereof.
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a farm apprenticeship program to be
6 administered and funded through the Agency of Agriculture for the purpose of
7 gaining on-farm practical experience for those students graduating with an interest
8 in their future in the ag industry. (2007)
9

10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports increased funding for agricultural
11 programs at Vermont Technical College, including the 2 plus 2 (FARMS) program
12 offered in cooperation with the University of Vermont. We support a seamless
13 transition between the two institutions for the 2 plus 2 program. We further
14 support continued funding for scholarships in the 2 plus 2 program. (2010)
15

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports UVM's College of Agriculture Dairy
17 Center of Excellence. (2010)
18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an agriculture teaching program at
20 VTC in conjunction with a state college teaching program. (2009)
21

22 To reduce the property tax burden on farms in individual towns we
23 support adequate state funding of special education and urge review of both the
24 Department of Education and the Special Education program by the legislature, the
25 governor and the state auditor to minimize waste and ensure public confidence.
26 (2005)
27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the U.S. congress to fund special
29 education at the 40% level promised when the Equal Educational Opportunities
30 law was passed.
31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports local control of schools by local school
33 boards with budgets approved by town meetings or municipal elections. We urge
34 the legislature to review teacher contract labor negotiation laws and regulations to
35 maintain local control. We oppose replacing local school boards with district or
36 regional school boards. (2005)
37

38 Consistent with our philosophy of free market competition, Vermont
39 Farm Bureau supports school choice and those programs that recognize and hold

1 school systems accountable for the quality and performance of education in our
2 Vermont school systems.

3

4 Vermont Farm Bureau urges that before new school buildings are built
5 every effort be made to renovate and use existing buildings for educational needs
6 and that state policy encourages such efforts. (2007)

7

8 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes unfunded education mandates by
9 government.(2007)

10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports all aspects of agriculture and the
12 continued operation of a dairy herd at VTC for educational purposes. (2010)

13

14 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

12

15 We urge that the federal Endangered Species Act differentiate between
16 species that are truly in danger of extinction and those marginally threatened. We
17 also recommend amendment of the Vermont Threatened and Endangered Species
18 Act to:

19

1) Require state cost sharing and compensation for species
preservation.

20

21 2) Change the method by which species are added to the threatened or
22 endangered list by making the process more scientific and providing
23 automatic annual de-listing of species.

24

3) Provide incentives and/or compensation to private landowners
where threatened or endangered species are located.

25

26 4) Include business representatives and landowners on the Endangered
27 Species Advisory Committee.

28

5) Require the state to develop written standards outlining all
conservation programs, and distribute them to private landowners.

29

30 6) Consider gene banking as an option for preserving species.

31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes listing the Lynx, wolf or the Indiana Bat
33 as endangered or threatened species.

34

35 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the reintroduction of wolves into
36 Vermont. (2010)

37

38 **ENERGY / UTILITIES**

13

39 Vermont Farm Bureau should be actively involved in any restructuring
40 of Vermont's electric utilities. Any restructuring should provide:

- 1) Unrestricted customer choice of electric supplier
- 2) Reasonable rules to allow consolidation of electric distributors
- 3) Amendment of Vermont commercial law to allow farmer owned organizations to serve as consolidators to facilitate negotiation of least-cost rates
- 4) Equitable treatment of rural customers
- 5) That Vermont utilities profit from power transit business
- 6) Maintenance of strong Vermont-based retail distribution companies
- 7) Elimination of seasonal differential rates
- 8) Asset securitization and ensure that asset disposal will also benefit rate-payers.

Vermont Farm Bureau does not support inclining block electric rates.

Vermont Farm Bureau favors efforts to maintain or lower electric rates in Vermont. (2009)

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

Vermont Farm Bureau urges support for regional and national efforts to develop sources of renewable energy from agricultural production and land and also to include wind, solar, fiber and hydro, as a priority national energy policy, as is promoted by the 25 by 25 initiative. Vermont Farm Bureau supports tax breaks and other incentives directed towards renewable on farm energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro, biodiesel, biogas, methane and methane digesters, and wood chip systems, and the development of educational programs that provide technical advice in these technologies. (2010)

Vermont Farm Bureau supports the use of outdoor wood-burning furnaces and should work to ensure that any regulations developed are favorable to the agriculture and forestry communities. (2006)

Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that fluorescent light bulbs be included in the hazardous waste special drop programs sponsored by Solid Waste Districts around the state. (2007)

Vermont Farm Bureau supports net metering. (2008)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau would oppose the Federal increase in the
2 percentage of ethanol in gasoline. (2010)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves to urge the State of Vermont and
5 Vermont Farm Bureau to do all they can to stabilize carbon dioxide levels in the
6 atmosphere by promoting alternative energy systems and efficient heating and
7 transportation methods. (2010)

8
9 **ENVIRONMENT**

14

10 Vermont Farm Bureau urges congress to clarify and affirm that
11 agriculture is not subject to the Comprehensive Environmental and Liability Act
12 (CERCLA), nor to the Environmental Planning and Community Right to Know Act
13 (EPCRA), correcting misinterpretations of these acts by the Environmental
14 Protection Agency (EPA). (2007)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a requirement that all EPA regulations,
17 rule making and procedures adopted regarding agriculture and forestry be based
18 on solid, peer reviewed data and that the requirements derived from both the
19 Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act include standards based performance goals
20 based on sound science with data subject to peer review. We also request our
21 Congressional delegation to support requiring a cost-benefit analysis before
22 implementation of all such regulation. (2010)

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau should promote the image of Vermont farms as
25 environmentally friendly, sustainable users of the land.

26
27 All regulations governing the uses of Vermont farm and forestland
28 should explicitly acknowledge that evidences of human activity are a necessary,
29 pleasing and desirable part of the natural landscape.

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly urges the State and U.S. Government to
32 work closely with all nations to address the threat of global warming and to reduce
33 the production of greenhouse gases. (2002)

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau supports Climate change legislation with Cap
36 and Trade language that could create additional revenue for the agriculture
37 industry. Agriculture should not be included under the cap. (2008)

38
39 Vermont Farm Bureau supports additional time and further research
40 before EPA's final ruling and implementation of air quality standards. We propose

1 that Congress support with financial funding a study of air quality standards, such
2 research to be solid and not funded by companies and also to look to other
3 countries' research in regard to this. (2006)

4

5 EQUINE

15

6 Vermont Farm Bureau aggressively supports full and equal status
7 within agriculture for Vermont's equine owners. To achieve such status we
8 support:

- 9 1) Equine property being eligible as Agricultural property in UVA
- 10 2) Inclusion of the equine owners under the agricultural sales tax
11 exemptions.
- 12 3) Maintaining an active equine committee within Vermont Farm
13 Bureau.
- 14 4) Trails, parking areas and camping sites for equine activity being
15 made available in Green Mountain national Forest and State
16 parklands.
- 17 5) Developing an expanded definition of farmer to include equine
18 businesses as farming operations. (2010)

19

20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports revision of the Vermont Equine statute
21 to set limitations of liability per incident. (2010)

22

23 FINANCE

16

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

29

30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the need to modernize and expand
31 Farm Credit's ability to serve agriculture and Rural America to help them compete
32 and thrive in the emerging global market. We support action by Congress to
33 eliminate the exit provision of the Farm Credit Act. Farm Credit agencies should
34 not be bought and sold out of the control of the farmers involved. (2005)

35

36 The Vermont Farm Bureau supports efforts of the Farm Credit System
37 to insure that adequate credit is available for agriculture. (2006)

38

1 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages increased funding by the USDA, in
2 the form of low interest loans and grants, to be used for alternative manure
3 management practices (i.e. anaerobic digesters). (2007)
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that lenders should be held harmless
6 from the actions of a borrower if a lawsuit should result from irresponsible actions
7 of a borrower.
8

9 FORESTRY

17

10 Recognizing the importance of working forests, and the products
11 harvested and manufactured from working forests, are important for absorbing
12 and storing greenhouse gases, the Vermont Farm Bureau asks the U.S. Forest
13 Service to study and prepare estimates, as to the potential of Forest Service lands to
14 absorb and store greenhouse gases, when managed as working forests, as
15 compared with unmanaged wilderness forests. Similarly, the U.S. Forest Service
16 should study and estimate the adverse effects on air quality and wildlife, from
17 wildfire on Forest Service lands; and to estimate the differences between managed
18 and unmanaged lands. (2007)
19

20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation of traditional uses on the
21 former Champion Paper Company land and all State Forestland for recreational
22 and commercial uses. (2007)
23

24 We support exclusive use of Vermont's Acceptable Management
25 Practices (AMP's) to evaluate whether timber harvesting conforms with
26 environmental quality standards. (2006)
27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports landowner based Green marketing
29 initiatives which promote use of timber sourced from sustainably managed and
30 privately owned North American woodlands, such as the Sustainable Forestry
31 Initiative (SFI) and the American Tree Farm Systems PEFC certification. (2010)
32

33 Farmers should not be required to obtain zoning permits or
34 environmental review before converting forested land to agricultural uses. (2006)
35

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

40 1) The land must earn a reasonable profit growing forest products.

- 2) The average annual harvest of forest products should approximate the long-term average annual growth of those forest products.
- 3) Forestland must be assessed for tax purposes at use value.
- 4) All generally accepted silvicultural tools, including clear cutting and aerial spraying, must be available to owners of forestland.
- 5) In order to promote development of robust value-added wood manufacturing enterprises in rural towns, Vermont should devise business friendly legal, transportation, energy, communication, economic, tax and regulatory policies. (2006)
- 6) Forest management plans should provide for multiple uses on virtually all lands where feasible.
- 7) There should be no additional acquisition of forestland by the government until existing forests managed by state and federal agencies begin regular harvesting of those forests and develop a formal policy on land acquisition.

All government land acquisitions should meet the following conditions:

- 1) The state and/or federal government obtains local (municipal) approval before purchasing land in that community
- 2) There is no net gain in the amount of land owned or controlled by government as a result of the purchase.
- 3) Government land acquisition should be funded exclusively by sale or trade of existing property.
- 4) Government owned land should be valued by Listers and pay tax to Towns in the same manner and rates as equivalent privately owned land. (2010)

Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any further permanent wilderness being designated in Vermont for the indefinite future. We favor prompt return of all areas not presently in permanent wilderness to continued professional multiple use management by the United States Forest Service. Vermont Farm Bureau does not support additional Congressional designated wilderness. (2006)

Vermont Farm Bureau supports the revisions to the U.S. Forest Service roadless rule which would protect existing roads and allow the construction of new roads for the purposes of harvesting timber, improving wildlife habitat, and fighting forest fires. (2005)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports sustainable timber harvest in the Green
2 Mountain National Forest. (2003)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the Wild Lands Project or any
5 analogous attempt to depopulate forested land in the Northeast Kingdom of
6 Vermont. (2006)

7
8 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the Conservation and Reinvestment Act
9 (CARA) or any similar acts and recognizes that the private ownership of property
10 is the foundation of a prosperous economy and a free society. Vermont Farm
11 Bureau opposes expanded government ownership of working rural lands because
12 of the threat to the resource base of the farm and forest industries, the threat to the
13 tax base of many rural communities and in some cases, the threat to the survival of
14 rural communities.

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the promotion and maintenance of
17 current sawmills and encourages development of new sites. (2003)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a coordinated national and state effort
20 to halt the spread of non-native plants, pathogens, or pests destructive to forest
21 productivity, including Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), Emerald Ash Borer,
22 Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and the Garlic Mustard plant. Appropriate measures
23 may include:

- 24 1) Ban on untreated woody materials such as blocking or pallets from
25 China and other countries with potential insect invaders;
- 26 2) Monitoring of populations both visual and using pheromone traps;
- 27 3) Removal and disposal of all infected trees or clearing of infested
28 sites with appropriate quarantines and enforcement;
- 29 4) Incorporation of identification and eradication information into all
30 continuing education programs conducted for farmers, foresters,
31 loggers, and the general public including displays at fairs,
32 conventions, and other public events. (2010)

33
34

35 **GOVERNMENT-FEDERAL** **18**

36 Vermont Farm Bureau should initiate legislation in Congress to
37 establish a Trust Fund or Pension Fund for Social Security Funds.

38
39 Vermont Farm Bureau supports:

- 1) Legislation mandating that Congress comply with all laws with no exemptions.
- 2) Elimination of special privileges reserved for members of Congress.
- 3) A Constitutional amendment protecting the flag of the United States from any form of desecration.
- 4) A Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget.

Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the President of the United States issuing executive orders as law.

GOVERNMENT - MISCELLANEOUS

19

Vermont Farm Bureau supports the reaffirmation of the fundamental practice of political power and participation beginning with and flowing from the people at the local level.

Vermont Farm Bureau urges that public hearings affecting farmers be fully and prominently warned and held in locations and at times to maximize participation by farmers.

We oppose all unfunded government mandates and request the legislature to request an annual report from Vermont's congressional delegation regarding the cost of new federal laws and regulations.

Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to prohibit transfer of funds for use contrary to the designated purpose of such funds.

GOVERNMENT - STATE

20

Vermont Farm Bureau believes that:

- 1) All appointments to House Committees and Chairs of those Committees in the Vermont House of Representatives should be made by a three (3) member committee consisting of the Speaker, the Majority and the Minority leader.
- 2) The Governor should have the "line item veto" to help curb wasteful and unnecessary expenditures.
- 3) Term limits of 12 successive years for Vermont state legislators and members of Congress should be established.
- 4) Any bill that would increase taxes should require a super-majority of at least 60 percent in both the Vermont House and Senate in order to become law.

- 1 5) The Vermont legislature should be required to complete its business
- 2 by April 15th of each year.
- 3 6) Before any piece of legislation may be passed by the Vermont House
- 4 or Senate, it must have been subject to both a financial impact
- 5 statement and a competitive impact statement.
- 6 7) Issues dealing with agriculture be debated on their own merit and
- 7 not held hostage by other non-germane issues.

8
9 Vermont Farm Bureau advocates reducing the size and cost of state
10 government. Further, we oppose taking funds from the property tax abatement
11 programs (e.g., state aid to education, property tax rebates for low-income
12 households, Current Use and Payment in Lieu of Taxes - PILOT) for other
13 purposes.

14 **HEALTH**

21

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislative efforts to address the cost
17 crisis in health care and to make health insurance available and affordable to all
18 Vermonters by implementing reforms that provide for:

- 19 1) A private healthcare system based on free market competition.
- 20 2) Consumer freedom of choice in health care decisions.
- 21 3) Personal financial responsibility for health care choices
- 22 4) Incentives for health care decisions that save money.
- 23 5) Discouraging frivolous medical malpractice suits.
- 24 6) Equal (i.e. 100%) deductibility of health care expenses for
- 25 individuals and larger businesses
- 26 7) Flexible employee benefit packages for maximum benefit to
- 27 employees.
- 28 8) Age-adjusted discounts.
- 29 9) Healthy lifestyle discounts.
- 30 10) Electronic claims processing.
- 31 11) A unified universal claims form.
- 32 12) The opportunity for small businesses to have self-insurance plans.
- 33 13) Opportunity for individuals or businesses to join HMO's if so
- 34 desired
- 35 14) A tax credit of at least \$300.00 to be earned annually by Vermont
- 36 families to help offset their annual payments for the purchase of a
- 37 long term care insurance policy.
- 38 15) Portability of insurance policies. Vermonters should be able to
- 39 purchase health insurance from an out of state carrier much like
- 40 other insurance products. (2007)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports these considerations to be included in
2 any restructuring of health care by the US Congress:

- 3 1) Portability across State lines
- 4 2) Tort reform to decrease insurance costs to primary health providers
- 5 3) No tax upon uninsured individuals or small businesses
- 6 4) Tax equity between employer directed and individual insurance
- 7 premiums
- 8 5) Free choice among various levels of insurance coverage
- 9 6) Not to discriminate against pre-existing conditions (2009)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports repeal of the Federal Health Care Bill
12 of 2010, in order to permit implementation of health care measures embodying the
13 principles outlined above. (2010)

14
15 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the repeal of the requirement that
16 small business issue a 1099 to all vendors and service providers supplying more
17 than \$600.00 of business during a calendar year. (2010)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining our rural hospitals.

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau believes the Legislature and Executive Branch
22 should re-examine, revise and repeal laws and regulations that mandate joint and
23 several liability for excessive losses by health insurers, and laws and regulations
24 that prohibit or discourage health insurers from creating insurance products that
25 provide consumers and businesses greater freedom of choice with greater personal
26 responsibility, by charging premiums that allow discounts for age, occupation,
27 healthy behavior and coverage.

28
29 We urge further study of the role of animal fats and hydrogenated
30 vegetable oils in human health. The Vermont Farm Bureau requests that research
31 regarding the relationship between intake of dairy products and bone density
32 measurements throughout the human life span be done before any change in the
33 recommended intake of dairy products, particularly of milk as a beverage of choice
34 during periods of growth. (2003)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports "Fit and Healthy Kids," an
37 interdepartmental cooperation between the Vermont Department of Health and the
38 Department of Education, with the goal of improving child nutrition by promoting
39 a healthy diet of fresh food from local farms. (2010)

2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Worker Compensation report,
3 prepared in 2009 by a private sector task force of employers, manufactures, small
4 business, and self-employed persons subject to worker compensation. We ask that
5 the Legislature adapt the changes which would improve delivery of service to
6 injured employees, reduce the administrative costs imposed on employers,
7 simplify the claims process, and stabilize the program. We also ask that benefits be
8 the same as bordering states to give us a level playing field. (2010)

9

10 Vermont Farm Bureau continues to support workers compensation
11 reform initiatives and opposes that the value of housing be included in the payroll.
12 (covered compensation) (2007)

13

14 Vermont Farm Bureau supports workers compensation insurance
15 reform that will enable providers to offer affordable workers compensation
16 insurance coverage for farmers while continuing to provide reasonable care and
17 compensation to injured workers. (2006)

18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports immigration reform that would allow
20 for the use of migrant workers year round on dairy farms. (2010)

21

22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to exempt payment of
23 unemployment benefits to seasonal employees except during the seasonal period
24 of employment. Further, we oppose any increase in unemployment benefits.

25

26 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes inconsistent and heavy handed
27 enforcement by the INS of cases involving undocumented farm workers. We urge
28 congress to simplify visa procedures for farm workers, to recognize the human
29 rights of persons who enter this country seeking work, and to lessen the penalties
30 against employers who hire foreign workers who possess valid documents and to
31 include a reasonable path to citizenship for those interested laborers. (2008)

32

33 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports AgJOBS legislation as
34 introduced in the U.S. House and Senate. (2007)

35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves that Vermont farm employers should
37 not be responsible for the no-match IDs of employees or subject to any penalties as
38 a result. (2007)

39

1 Vermont Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of its work force and
2 the rights, health and well-being of workers on our farms. Vermont Farm Bureau
3 supports agricultural representation on the Human Trafficking Task Force and will
4 work to ensure any legislation developed from the Task Force discussions does not
5 negatively affect labor forces on Vermont farms. (2010)

6

7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports aggressive action to improve the
8 availability of foreign guest workers for dairy and other year round agricultural
9 operations by:

- 10 1) Urging Congress to create a year round guest worker category for
11 dairy farm workers, not to include a provision to deport all current
12 immigrants. This category would be determined by a much-
13 simplified determination of need. (2008)
- 14 2) Improving the ability of farmers to determine an employee's legal
15 status
- 16 3) Investigating establishment of a member service to recruit legal farm
17 workers
- 18 4) Improving our Federal H2a guest worker program (2003)
- 19 5) Encouraging a state sanctioned worker identification program

20

21 We support reducing welfare benefits and reform of Vermont's welfare
22 program to include a budget cap on welfare spending. Further, we favor paying
23 qualified recipients the difference between money they are able to earn and the
24 amount for which they are eligible rather than the total payment coming from
25 public funds.

26

27 **LEGAL /LIABILITY**

23

28 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the legislature to minimize the legal tort
29 liability of agricultural businesses as it adds undue costs and is contrary to the
30 public interest.

31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports protecting private property owners
33 from lawsuits by persons who enter their property with or without permission.

34

35 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the legislature to replace the "willful and
36 wanton misconduct" standard with an "intentional infliction of harm" standard in
37 the so-called Landowner Liability statute.

38

39 Reforms to Landowner Liability Laws should include provisions that
40 protect landowners from injury that is the result of activities associated with the

1 usual and customary practice of farming or forestry. And that the following
2 language be included to further protect private property rights: "The fact that a
3 landowner has permitted use, either implied (by not posting the land), or
4 expressed for recreation purposes does not establish a claim or right, nor can it be
5 used to establish such a claim by the users. The fact that a landowner has not
6 posted the land, thereby permitting access, shall not limit or preclude the
7 landowner from excluding or limiting trails or uses at any time in the future."
8

9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a "loser pays" or English Rule statute
10 when a lawsuit is ruled to be "frivolous" by the court.
11

12 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that the liability of property owners for
13 injury by livestock or guardian animals be strictly limited to cases of gross and
14 willful negligence.
15

16 The liability of landowners for injuries suffered by the public should be
17 strictly limited except for "intentional infliction of harm," nor should a landowner
18 be liable for any injury suffered upon a structure erected to comply with a directive
19 from a state or federal agency.
20

21 We support the right of self-defense for property and person. We also
22 support victims of crime being afforded the same rights as criminals and urge
23 amendments to laws and regulations affirming these rights.
24

25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the lawful ownership and use of
26 sporting firearms by private individuals as provided in the Vermont and United
27 States Constitutions.
28

29 **LIVESTOCK**

24

30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the promotion of good animal care
31 practices.
32

33 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a code of ethics for livestock shows,
34 and encourages the enforcement by the show superintendent. (2005)
35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that any mandatory uniform national
37 livestock ID program should be supported by federal funds. (2005)
38

39 Vermont Farm Bureau supports premise registration and other farm
friendly measures that seek to reduce risk of diseases and other biohazard

1 outbreaks and that in no way burdens or discourages small scale agriculture in the
2 State of Vermont. (2006)

3

4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports including non-surgical implantation of
5 embryos as a non-veterinary technique in Vermont veterinary standards.

6

7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation allowing trained
8 technicians, with a veterinarians approval, to implant embryos in farm animals.
9 (2007)

10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the FDA to make available, without
12 prescription, more commonly used livestock drugs that have proven safety
13 records. (2003)

14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau requests that the Vermont livestock inspection
16 division create a written consistent protocol for portable slaughterhouse businesses
17 that would allow these businesses to operate on farms and produce meat that is
18 saleable within the state. (2003)

19

20 **MAPLE**

25

21 All authority to regulate Vermont maple industry standards shall be
22 vested in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

23

24 We believe that the Vermont maple industry is adequately regulated to
25 insure the highest standards of quality and protect the public health. We also
26 support the free and voluntary registration of sugar makers by county to assist the
27 Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in its work.

28

29 Acknowledging the critical importance of Vermont's maple industry to
30 tourism and our economy, Vermont Farm Bureau supports adequate public
31 funding for maple industry research including the Proctor Maple Research
32 Laboratory.

33

34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the ongoing development of criteria
35 for the use of public lands in Vermont for maple sap harvesting and urges state
36 agencies to cooperate with the Vermont Maple Industry Council in their
37 development.

38

39

40

1 **ORGANIC**

26

2 The Vermont Farm Bureau recognizes the advancement of organic
3 agriculture in the state and urges the Vermont state legislature to support the Ag
4 Agency, the University of Vermont and the Vermont Technical College in research
5 and development of organic production techniques. (2005)

6

7 **PLANNING**

27

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

14

15 We support local rather than state decision-making regarding
16 recreation paths, scenic corridors and other land use planning issues.

17

18 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Farm Bureau members to serve on local
19 and regional planning and zoning commissions to work to inform and educate
20 these boards on issues of importance to agriculture. We support a simple appeals
21 process at all levels.

22

23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued exemption from local
24 zoning and Act 250 for agricultural improvements. (2006)

25

26 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that reducing sprawl should begin with
27 reform of the following existing laws and regulations:

28

- 29 1) Vermont land gains tax
- 30 2) On-site septic regulations
- 31 3) Act 250 road-building regulations
- 32 4) Property taxes on farm land.

32

33 **PROPERTY OWNERS' RIGHTS**

28

34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports protection of private property owners'
35 rights embodied in the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Vermont.

36

37 Vermont Farm Bureau favors the right of landowners to remove gravel
38 from streams to keep them from flooding and eroding and that this channel
39 management tool is considered as one option when a problem is being assessed.
40 (2010)

1 Restrictions on the ownership or use of private property by
2 government should be made only in cases of compelling public interest.

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the right of property owners to utilize
5 their property including providing private hunting opportunities, including fenced
6 hunting areas.

7
8 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation at the federal, state, and
9 local levels that would require Government agencies to prepare private property
10 impact statements for any new laws or regulations that impair the use, value or
11 other ownership rights of private property.

12
13 Any rule making committee, governmental agency or legislative body
14 of federal, state and local authority which enforces rules and regulations which
15 reduces the value of private property shall reimburse the property owner for lost
16 value and the municipality for lost tax revenue. Such decrease in values shall be
17 determined by the local board of civil authority through the tax appeal process and
18 the entity responsible for the loss shall pay the cost.

19
20 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the use of government condemnation
21 powers to seize private property for recreation trails.

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that the right of individual privacy is
24 guaranteed by Article 11 of the Vermont Constitution. Further, we assert that
25 recent decisions of the Vermont Supreme Court are not constitutional and,
26 therefore, we urge that legislation be passed to:

- 27 1) Insure that private driveways are not considered part of public
28 highways.
29 2) Provide that law enforcement must obtain a court-authorized
30 warrant before undertaking surveillance of any kind of private
31 property whether or not the property is posted or enclosed.

32
33 Ownership of abandoned rights of way should revert to abutting
34 landowners. When a new use is proposed in such rights of way, then a new right
35 of way agreement shall be negotiated. When abandoned rights of way are
36 acquired by government after compensation to the abutting landowners, we urge
37 that all maintenance including fences be adequately maintained by government.

38 (2006)

39

1 We support a law to require agencies of government to notify owners
2 of private property by certified mail 30 days before any consideration of any
3 proposed restriction, inclusion of the land in a government inventory, map or plan,
4 or any action that affects the use or value of the property. We urge that all agencies
5 of government respect the right of private property owners to review any such
6 proposals and their right to appeal any decision to a higher authority or the courts,
7 and that violators of the law receive prompt investigation and adjudication.

8
9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to prohibit well head
10 protection areas being created on anyone's property without their written
11 permission.

12
13 Vermont Farm Bureau believes there should be appropriate and
14 immediate enforcement of trespassing laws with penalties to enable and compel
15 law enforcement authorities to assist landowners in protecting property from
16 unwanted trespassers. (2007)

17
18 We believe that private property is private and that governmental
19 officials and the public must obtain permission from property owners before
20 entering private property for any purpose.

21
22 We support the right of private property owners to post their land.

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the efforts of Vermont Traditions
25 Coalition to make sure that management on public lands is supportive of
26 individual property rights, and to strengthen a coalition of farming, forestry,
27 hunting, and outdoor sporting interests. (2003)

28
29 The Vermont legislature should adopt a law, as urged by the U.S.
30 Supreme Court in *Kelo vs New London*, restricting the use of powers of eminent
31 domain to cases of public necessity. Property taken by eminent domain should be
32 the smallest quantity necessary for the stated use, and should be devoted entirely
33 to public use. Government should never seize property for the purpose of
34 transferring to a second private party. (2010)

35
36 **RECREATION**

29

37 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that farm and forestlands are first and
38 foremost for farm and forest production. We acknowledge, however, that many
39 private property owners voluntarily allow public access to their land for recreation

1 of all kinds and for public rights of way and that in return it is fair and reasonable
2 that the following conditions apply to such access:

- 3 1) Property owner permission must be obtained.
- 4 2) Information or data gathered with the voluntary participation of the
5 private property owner belongs first to the property owner who gave
6 permission for any other proposed uses of the data.
- 7 3) The recreational use must be compatible with generally accepted
8 farm and forest practices.
- 9 4) Signage and informational materials should be made available to
10 recreational users to encourage respect for private property.
- 11 5) Costs of public recreation should be borne by the public.
- 12 6) Private support to help maintain and improve lands allowing public
13 access should be encouraged.

14

15 **REGULATION**

30

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports oversight of agriculture by the
17 Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets on all issues affecting
18 agriculture. Further, we support exempting agriculture from Act 250 as being
19 fundamentally in the public interest.

20

21 The Vermont Farm Bureau supports a change in law with respect to
22 Act 250. For land in which development is proposed to occur that is devoted to
23 agriculture or forest management, any restrictions or conditions placed on the
24 development in order to obtain an Act 250 permit shall apply only to the portion of
25 the property involved in the development and forestry and agricultural uses can
26 continue without restrictions or encumbrances. (2005)

27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that manure pits should not be
29 assumed to be leaking unless that assumption is verified by testing. (2005)

30

31 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that natural emissions from agriculture
32 should not be regulated under national air quality standards. (2005)

33

34 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports 24 VSA, SEC 4413 entitled
35 "Limitations on Municipal Bylaws". (2006)

36

37 Vermont Farm Bureau favors the right of landowners to have the right
38 to cut their trees in the road right of way without having to get a permit from the
39 town.

40

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislative changes creating a statute of
2 limitations of 7 years for state subdivision permit violations where such action was
3 not willful and where there is no threat to the public health and safety.
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that farm enterprises be exempt
6 from the Labor and Industry Public Building permitting requirements if:

- 7 1) Those enterprises are involved primarily in production, preparation
8 or packaging farm products harvested on the premises.
- 9 2) There is no substantial public access to the farm buildings other than
10 by farm workers.

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports exempting existing gravel pits from
13 Act 250 review.
14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau favors legislation to streamline the present
16 environmental permitting process by providing more information to permit
17 applicants, and avoiding duplication, unnecessary delays and frivolous appeals.
18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports expedited approval for
20 communications facilities, including cell towers, which may be based in or upon
21 existing farm structures, or land. (2001)
22

23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining the right of farmers to
24 contract for cell towers on conserved land without penalty. (2002)
25

26 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuing efforts by the Agency_of
27 Agriculture working with the Department of Environmental Conservation to
28 streamline the burdensome permitting process for slaughter houses in Vermont.
29

30 We support exempting farms with fewer than 10 employees from
31 OSHA regulations.
32

33 Vermont Farm Bureau supports reciprocity for pesticide applicators, if
34 they are certified in a bordering state.
35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports reciprocity of a well drilling license
37 between Vermont and neighboring states.
38

39 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the following provisions for the
40 regulation of large farming operations (LFO's).

- 1) Authority remaining with the Agency of Agriculture.
- 2) Eliminating duplication of permit review of manure pits and any other aspect of the proposed LFO. (2003)

The Vermont Farm Bureau supports the creation of an agricultural exemption allowing agricultural ventures to have both port-o-lets and state approved septic systems. (2003)

Vermont Farm Bureau opposes mitigation of primary ag soils. (2006)

Vermont Farm Bureau believes that criterion 9(b) primary ag soils should be eliminated from the Act 250 environmental development law. (2006)

RIGHT TO FARM AND PRACTICE FORESTRY

31

Vermont Farm Bureau supports:

- 1) The right of Vermont private property owners to produce and market agricultural products in a positive way that promotes Vermont agriculture.
- 2) A farmer's right to choose agricultural methods, including modern technologies providing that Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP's), Accepted Management Practices (AMP's), careful land stewardship and proper animal husbandry are practiced.
- 3) Actions to insure that farmers be protected from undue liability and nuisance suits when carrying out such practices.
- 4) Informing all purchasers of Vermont property of a private property owner's fundamental "right to farm" within "Accepted Agricultural Practices".

Vermont Farm Bureau should continue efforts to strengthen the state's right to farm law. (2005)

Vermont Farm Bureau supports only the Secretary of Agriculture, not towns or other Municipalities setting the standards for nuisance issues of noise, odor, traffic, flies and other pests on all agricultural operations. (2008)

Vermont Farm Bureau supports the introduction of legislation that would require that homebuyers who move next to farms be informed that agriculture can be noisy, odiferous, dusty - and that farmers have a right to farm and require developers and real estate agents to inform potential buyers about Vermont's right-to-farm whenever property changes hands. (2008)

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Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation of the Large Farm Operation law with an appropriate level of review by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets of large livestock operations and the impacts these have on the environment and the community. We will do whatever is necessary to keep all agriculture oversight within the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

Vermont Farm Bureau resolves that commercial farms encroached on by suburban areas should not be subject to regulation under nuisance or noise laws, and that all existing regulatory exemptions for on-going farm operations should be maintained.

SEAL OF QUALITY 32

Vermont Farm Bureau supports development within the Agency of Agriculture of a Seal of Quality program for the purpose of promoting Vermont grown or Vermont processed foods and food products. Farmers and local food processors should be included in the rule-making and administrative oversight committees under this program. (2010)

SOLID WASTE 33

Vermont Farm Bureau supports commonsense approaches to Vermont’s solid waste problems that come from locally developed solutions, including marketing of recycled materials and efficient handling of waste collection and transportation. Especially helpful would be simple and clear guidelines for achieving effective waste disposal. We especially support:

- 1. development of effective recycling for farm-generated waste such as plastics;
- 2. allowing farm generated residuals that are composted on the farm to be done without permits under accepted ag practices.
- 3. permitting of composting with guidelines for accepting compostable waste from off a particular farm
- 4. encouragement of businesses assisting farms in disposal of farm waste. (2010)

Vermont Farm Bureau requests the Agency of Agriculture return to the position that composting of off farm food scraps on the farm is an acceptable Agricultural Practice (AAP) as long as the compost is principally used on the farm. (2010)

Vermont Farm Bureau encourages increased funding by USDA in the form of low interest loans and grants to be used for anaerobic digesters. (2009)

2 Vermont Farm Bureau favors repeal of inheritance taxes as they are an
3 unfair second tax on assets which works against future generations continuing
4 family farm operations. Absent outright repeal we support increasing the federal
5 exemption. (2006)

6

7 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the sunseting of the current federal
8 estate tax law (\$3.5 million exemption per individual) as it exists in 2010 and asks
9 that the State of Vermont establish a state estate tax exemption the same as the
10 federal. (2010)

11

12 Estate taxes on agricultural and forestland should be based on current
13 use value rather than on fair market value.

14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau supports HR3524, the Family Farm Preservation
16 and Conservation Estate Tax Act, which exempts farms from estate taxes upon
17 death of the owner as long as the ownership stays within the family. (2009)

18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports simplification of the federal tax code.

20

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

22

23 Vermont Farm Bureau urges that state sales and rooms and meals tax
24 policy as regards agricultural enterprises be clarified and applied consistently to:

25

1) Food and maple product containers

26

2) Vermont products used for promotion of agriculture

27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports continuation of the retail sales
29 tax exemption for agricultural items and we oppose local and state taxes on farm
30 machinery used for custom work.

31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the drafting of legislation that would
33 allow motorized vehicles registered as agricultural vehicles to be exempt from the
34 Vermont sales tax. (2005)

35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the addition of a sales tax to gasoline.

37

38 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that the state of Vermont should
39 eliminate the state capital gains tax on the first \$10,000 on long-term investment.

40

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a portion of the 9% rooms and meals
2 tax equal to 1% of the total amount raised be used to support mandated
3 conservation programs on farms. These additional funds will be administered
4 through the Agency of Agriculture. (2006)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the reinstatement of the Federal
7 Investment Tax Credit for farm equipment and adopting a Vermont investment tax
8 credit that includes and enhances opportunities for processing Vermont grown
9 agriculture and forest products.

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the minimum entity tax on
12 partnerships.

13
14 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that college expenses should be
15 deductible expenses on individual tax returns.

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes decoupling the state income tax from
18 the federal income tax.

19
20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a sales tax exemption for building
21 materials used for agricultural construction and or renovations. (2003)

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports consideration of the "Fair tax"
24 consumption tax to replace the present federal income tax system. This tax would
25 allow every citizen an exemption of an indexed, tax-free base, to allow for a modest
26 basic cost of living. (2006)

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes a federal value added tax. (2009)

29
30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the rebate of state tax paid on fuel used
31 in vehicles registered with an agricultural plate. (2009)

32
33 **TAXATION-PROPERTY (2001 Section rewrite) 35**

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

36
37 Vermont Farm Bureau supports use value appraisal for all land
38 growing farm and forest products. This should be Vermont Tax policy, not a
39 program. (2010)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that farm and forest land should not
2 carry the burden of funding education and that residential property should share
3 equally in supporting education.
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau proposes that agricultural structures including
6 qualified equine structures be exempt from the property tax.
7

8 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an education finance reform plan,
9 calling on the Governor and Legislature to repeal current education funding laws
10 and enact a new law that incorporates all or some of the following specific
11 recommendations:

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

19
20 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes capital gains tax policy that gives a
21 competitive advantage to Land Trusts and Environmental Groups in the purchase
22 of rural land and other property. (2003)
23

24 **TAXATION / USE VALUE (2001 Section rewrite) 36**

25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Vermont Current Use Program and
26 supports the change to have it (Use Value Assessment) become permanent policy
27 that reflects the goal of keeping those who work the land, on the land. (2009)

28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an ag-use appraisal system for small
29 scale ag. (2007)
30

31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports permanent continuation of use value
32 appraisal, at values established by the Current Use Advisory Board.
33

34 If the present program is changed in any way, we support participants
35 being allowed to exit with no penalty and reducing or removing the penalty on
36 land removed from use value appraisal. We oppose so-called "tiered values" or
37 other restrictions like public access without owner permission on participation
38 such as the posting of property and urge that:

- 39 1) "Potential" and "prospective" be deleted from the definition of
40 appraisal value.

- 1 2) Property assessments should reflect encumbrances and restrictions
2 imposed by law or regulation including easements, Accepted
3 Management Practices, Accepted Agricultural Practices, EPA
4 regulations and zoning/town plans.
- 5 3) Farm and forest land should be assessed at its ability to produce
6 food and fiber.
- 7 4) Elimination of education taxes on working farm and forest lands.
8 (2002)
- 9 5) Participants in Use Value Appraisal not be disqualified if their lands
10 are operated for the purposes of fee hunting and fishing. (2003)

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the concept that land fully conserved by
13 grants of conservation easements should be valued on the Grand List at use value
14 and not included in the Current Use Program. (2010)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the lien placed against the deed of a Current
17 Use Program participant to be considered under law as a binding contract. (2010)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports that land considered to be developed and
20 withdrawn from the Current Use Program by reason of a gift to a relative or
21 employee, the LUCT (land Use Change Tax) shall consist only of the landowner
22 refunding a five year benefit on affected deed. (2010)

23 24 **TOURIST INFORMATION**

37

25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports tourist information signage policy that
26 is fair to all businesses.

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau should work closely with the Agency_of
29 Agriculture, Food and Markets to develop signage for state highways to direct the
30 public to agricultural businesses and destinations.

31 Vermont Farm Bureau support changes in Vermont's sign laws to:

- 32 1) Provide that signs must be a minimum of 6 feet off the traveled
33 portion of the highway and not out of the right of way
- 34 2) Clarify the definition of premises to mean land owned or leased
35 by the farmer
- 36 3) Allow temporary signs outside the confines of one's own
37 property with written permission.

2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports sufficient resources be allocated to
3 maintain a strong transportation infrastructure that will also support the
4 movement of agricultural products in our region. (2007)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a waiver from interstate weight limits
7 for trucks with agricultural or forestry products. (2009)

8
9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports authorizing properly configured trucks
10 hauling agricultural or forestry materials to operate at weights up to 97,000
11 pounds on any interstate highway. We urge the Vermont congressional Delegation
12 to make permanent the temporary waiver of lower weight limits granted to
13 Vermont for calendar 2010. (2010)

14 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes legislation that creates an unreasonable
15 hardship on an agritourism business or farm stand that has to use an existing
16 railroad crossing. (2008)

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

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports all farming activities involving a
24 Railroad Crossing shall be grandfathered as of 1/1/2009. (2008)

25
26 Vermont Farm Bureau requests the railroads identify all farm railroad
27 crossings and report same to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. (2008)

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the unrestricted right of vehicles
30 involved in natural resource industries to travel Vermont roads and highways
31 consistent with the public health and safety. Specialized equipment used to apply
32 materials to crops or to harvest crops should be considered agricultural vehicles for
33 the purpose of registration and permits.

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a mechanism that enables farmers and
36 custom operators to purchase highway diesel fuel tax-free at the point of purchase.
37 (2006)

38
39 Vermont Farm Bureau supports allowing tandem trailers on interstate
40 highways. We also support permitting trucks with agricultural or forest product

1 overweight permits authority to use interstate highways where feasible to
2 substantially shorten trips. (2006)

3

4 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that interstate highways allow the
5 same weight limits that are presently allowed on secondary highways.

6

7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to provide reciprocal
8 agreements, regulations and laws for truck travel between all New England states
9 and New York State.

10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports cooperation between town and state
12 highway officials and local farmers to develop reasonable solutions to problems
13 such as left-hand turns by farm machinery. We support educating drivers about
14 slow-moving vehicle signs in driver's manuals and public information campaigns.

15

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued improvement of U.S. Route
17 2 as the primary east-west corridor through northern New England.

18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a sales tax exemption on trucks
20 registered as agricultural. (2007)

21

22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the availability of natural gas for cars
23 and trucks.

24

25 The Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation of the weight limit
26 exemption of ag service vehicles (feed, fertilizers, and ag trucks). (2005)

27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages a cooperative effort between the
29 farming community and Vermont law enforcement to improve awareness
30 understanding, and voluntary compliance regarding laws that regulate flying
31 debris from mobile equipment. (2003)

32

33 Vermont Farm Bureau supports not including incidents involving farm
34 tractors on drivers' records when the farmer/employee is not at fault. (2003)

35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that when a farmer delivers product
37 processed on the farm for retail sale in his own truck, he should not be required to
38 meet CDL or hours of service requirements. (2006)

39

40

2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the concept that all forms of
3 agriculture be treated equitably under Farm Service programs and that production
4 records should be the only factor used to calculate indemnity payments under farm
5 services programs.

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports complete review of Farm Service
8 Agency guidelines in USDA disaster assistance programs.

10 **WATER QUALITY / STREAMS**

11 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the rulemaking of the Clean Water
12 Restoration Act (HR2421) of 2007 that would provide regulatory authority to the
13 Environmental Protection Agency over all water and would require the
14 enforcement of Clean Water Act requirements. (2007)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes state or federal designation of ground
17 water as a public trust. (2006)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the right of private property owners to
20 repair flood damage with prompt permission from NRCS with no lengthy permit
21 process and to remove gravel from streams without yard limits in cooperation with
22 the Army Corps of Engineers.

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes inclusion of state rivers in the federal
25 Wild and Scenic Rivers program. Further, we urge that buffer zones adjacent to
26 major rivers in Vermont not be larger than 25 feet unless an easement is purchased
27 from the landowner so affected. Land set aside in buffer strips should be excluded
28 from property taxation, since its economic use has been excluded.

29
30 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves that the 25 foot buffer requirement be
31 maintained and only required on waterways with year round running water.
32 (2008)

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the protection of groundwater under
35 Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP's) with oversight of water quality standards
36 by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets under 6 V.S.A. Chapter 215,
37 Section 4810(a). Further, we urge that regulatory agencies understand the special
38 and distinct requirements for water quality standards as they apply to agriculture
39 when making rules and regulations. And, that all farm water quality related issues
40 be solely under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Lake Champlain Basin Committee to
2 redirect funding from such efforts as implementing a TMDL analysis and
3 watershed planning. The committee should focus on implementing solutions to
4 known causes of phosphorous runoff including urban and suburban sources.
5 (2001)

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued funding for the
8 implementation of BMP's. VFB further supports having the Vermont Agency of
9 Agriculture make available matching funds to all types of farming for non-point
10 source water pollution control. Funds should be available for any farm
11 construction of pollution control and containment equipment or structures. (2010)

12
13 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any attempt to assess fees for water
14 withdrawal for recreational, commercial, municipal or agricultural use. (2001)

15

16 **WETLANDS**

41

17 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports the Natural Resource
18 Conservation Service as the sole agency for agricultural wetland issues and
19 delineations. We support hay land being included in the delineation of crops for
20 the purpose of establishing prior converted wetlands. We oppose the Natural
21 Resource Conservation Service being part of any other national agency than the
22 USDA.

23

24 VFB strongly objects to the heavy handed manner in which the existing
25 rules and regulation regarding wetlands are interpreted and enforced.

26

27 VFB calls for aggressive pursuit of existing AFBF policies on wetlands.

28

29 We urge the state and federal government to implement a definition
30 based on sound scientific evidence of protected wetlands which does not include
31 artificially created farm ponds, beaver dams or drainage ditches and to clarify
32 wetlands regulations to ensure that land which is defined as wetlands is wet, i.e.
33 completely saturated for at least a majority of days in the growing season in a year
34 of average rainfall. Land which is dry for the majority of the growing season in a
35 year of average rainfall should not be classified as wetland.

36

37 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the conversion of insignificant, Class 2
38 wetlands for agricultural purposes by the granting of general use permits. (2001)

39

1 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that private property owners be fairly
2 compensated when restrictions are placed on private wetlands. (2007)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the current definition of wetlands in
5 Vermont state law Title 10, Chapter 37 Section 902 (5). "Wetlands" means those
6 areas of the state that are inundated by surface or groundwater with a frequency
7 sufficient to support significant vegetation or aquatic life that depend on saturated
8 or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Such areas
9 include but are not limited to marshes, swamps, sloughs, potholes, fens, river and
10 lake overflows, mud flats, bogs and ponds, but excluding such areas as grow food
11 or crops in connection with farming activities. (2007)

12
13 **WILDLIFE**

42

14 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that the designation of the entire
15 Connecticut River Watershed as the Silvio Conte National Refuge has serious
16 implications for farming and forestry. We support efforts that would:

- 17 1) Remove farm and forest land from the refuge.
- 18 2) Address the concerns of landowners private property owners.
- 19 3) Protect agricultural and forestry operations in the watershed from
20 adverse impacts of refuge activities.
- 21 4) Coordinate activities of the Farm Bureaus of Vermont, New
22 Hampshire, Connecticut and Massachusetts to address these
23 concerns.
- 24 5) Restrict the introduction or reintroduction of any plant or animal
25 species onto state or federal owned land in the Conte refuge.

26
27 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that there be moose nuisance and
28 damage legislation that provides compensation to the victim including the option
29 of the moose itself.

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that 10% of the moose permits be
32 issued to resident applicants of the management unit in which the moose hunt is to
33 be held. We support legislation that would allow the legal taking of a moose,
34 turkey, deer or bear which is causing damage to crops, fences, agricultural
35 structures or other valuable property by the property owner or his designee on
36 their property. (2003)

37
38 We urge that the American Farm Bureau Federation oppose the
39 authority of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enforce the Endangered Species
40 Act.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the right of farmers to protect land
2 and assets on the farm from damage caused by beavers on or off their own land.
3 This is accomplished through directing jurisdiction to the Vermont Department of
4 Fish and Wildlife that shall respond to landowner requests, provide a solution to
5 the problem and resolve landowner disputes. (2002)

6

7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports regular application of lampricide to
8 Vermont streams or rivers feeding Lake Champlain according to regulation by the
9 Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. (2007)

10

11 **WORLD TRADE**

43

12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a level playing field for imports of
13 meat, dairy and other agricultural products including policy that would:

- 14 1. Apply U.S. Domestic standards for safety, quality and labeling.
- 15 2. Levy duties to offset foreign subsidies.
- 16 3. Implement country of origin labeling.
- 17 4. Decrease import quotas on milk, cheese and casein.
- 18 5. Mandate use of ingredient contents in accounting for import
19 quotas for food products.
- 20 6. Apply an assessment on all imported dairy products for dairy
21 promotion equivalent to that paid on domestic products.
- 22 7. charge \$1.00 per head for beef promotion, including all imported
23 beef to be distributed in the U.S.
- 24 8. Not allow foreign capital to gain control of companies critical to
25 the infrastructure of the United States, such as transportation,
26 energy and our food supply (2006).

27

28 The United States should not allow imports of infectious animal
29 products from nations harboring foot and mouth disease or from countries that
30 receive and transship such products. (2005)

31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the development and support of
33 federal and state programs that enhance the ability of private and cooperative
34 businesses to export farm products including value-added products such as dairy.
35 New entrants into the export market should be encouraged rather than stifled as
36 under current USDA rules. Specifically, USDA should revoke the rule that
37 requires previous export experience.

38

39 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the prohibition of any imported milk
40 protein concentrate, any blend of MPC and nonfat milk powder, or any blend of

1 nonfat milk powder and any dairy protein. Vermont Farm Bureau supports
2 maintaining dairy quotas presently in place and not allow any further importation
3 of dairy products from any country. In the following year import quotas should be
4 reduced to protect the prices of dairy. (2009)

5

6 The United States should not allow dairy products that require U.S.
7 Grade A sanitary standards (such as fluid milk and yogurt) to be imported from
8 nations lacking Grade A-inspection of their dairy farms, milk transportation
9 systems and dairy processing plants. (2005)

10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau backs the efforts to classify milk protein
12 concentrates (MPC) as a dairy product and have tariffs and promotion fees applied.
13 (2003)

14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau supports agricultural reciprocity with all nations
16 provided these nations have the same regulations on health and safety of the food.
17 (2010)

18

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