

1 **FOREWORD**

2
3 **Purpose of Vermont Farm Bureau**

4 Vermont Farm Bureau (VFB) is an independent, non-
5 governmental, voluntary organization governed by and
6 representing the families of farmers and foresters united for the
7 purpose of improving the net income of its members and
8 preserving Vermont’s rural quality of life. The mission of Vermont
9 Farm Bureau is to serve and advance Vermont agriculture. (2013)

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

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

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

29
30 **AGRICULTURE, GENERAL** **1**

31 A strong and prosperous agricultural economy is vital to
32 Vermont’s rural quality of life. We urge that the economic viability
33 of Vermont’s agricultural industry be paramount as public policies
34 are formulated. In this regard, Vermont Farm Bureau specifically
35 supports:

- 36 1) Use Value assessment of all farm and productive
- 37 forestland.
- 38 2) Voluntary sale or transfer of development rights.

- 1 3) Reducing capital gains and inheritance taxes.
- 2 4) Increasing investment tax credits.
- 3 5) Cost/benefit evaluation of all environmental and land use
- 4 regulation.
- 5 6) Compensation to landowners for any reduction in land
- 6 value caused by law or governmental regulation.
- 7 7) "Right to farm" protection for statutorily-defined
- 8 agricultural operations. (2011)
- 9 8) Strengthening and diversifying value-added processing of
- 10 agricultural products.
- 11 9) Efforts to educate and inform the public on ways farmers
- 12 provide stewardship for the land.
- 13 10) The development and implementation of a long-term
- 14 national farm policy. (2013)

15
16 We strongly support groups, organizations and institutions
17 which help strengthen Vermont agriculture.

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports that local USDA committees,
20 particularly FSA and NRCS, should consist of farmers who are
21 elected by local farmers. And, these farmers should maintain
22 leadership roles in boards and committees that have direct
23 oversight of their business practices. (2010)

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages increased funding by the
26 USDA in the form of low interest loans and grants to be used for a
27 variety of alternative manure management practices. (2011)

28
29 The Vermont Farm Bureau is concerned about the future of
30 UVM Extension. The VFB recommends that extension restore as
31 its mission, a solid commitment to address the concerns of the
32 working farm and forest community. (2009)

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports UVM and VTC maintaining
35 their dairy and equine programs for the purpose of hands-on,
36 experiential student learning in all phases of farming. (2011)

37

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports adequate funding of the
2 University of Vermont Extension System, and we offer our support
3 to maintain its specialized ability to work with the agricultural and
4 rural communities, particularly in subject areas and localities not
5 serviced by other agencies. (2011)

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports agricultural enterprises of
8 any size or commodity using traditional or non-traditional
9 methods that serve small or large markets. We support all
10 agricultural production, including organic, provided that the
11 producer follows Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP's) or
12 Accepted Management Practices (AMP's) for forestland.

13
14 Vermont Farm Bureau supports full funding of the FAP (Farm
15 Agronomics Practices) program. (2010)

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports funding the Vermont
18 Agrability Project, a joint venture between UVM Extension and
19 Vermont Center for Independent Living to assist disabled farmers
20 to continue active and productive lives on the farm. (2010)

21
22 Acknowledging its "land grant" origins, we support all efforts
23 of the University of Vermont to strengthen Vermont agriculture
24 and urge UVM leadership to be guided in key policy decisions by
25 its agricultural heritage. Further, we believe that the University of
26 Vermont should:

- 27 1) Make the educational needs of Vermonters its first priority.
- 28 2) Expand and improve the four-year agricultural program at
29 an affordable tuition.
- 30 3) Retain the title of the agricultural school in perpetuity and
31 keep Vermont's agricultural community as its primary
32 focus.

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the University of Vermont to
35 reaffirm Vermont's agricultural heritage of working forests by
36 reattaining their accreditation by the Society for American
37 Foresters. (2010)

1 We urge the Legislature to appropriate adequate funding with
2 a minimum annual stipend of \$200,000 to support county fairs
3 and field days.

4
5 We encourage active participation in Vermont's county fairs
6 and field days by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and
7 Markets. Furthermore, we urge that sufficient resources be
8 allocated by the Agency on an annual basis to maintain a first-
9 class Vermont Building at the Eastern States Exposition (the "Big
10 E") to both underline the importance of agriculture in Vermont
11 and educate the general public on Vermont's agriculture heritage
12 and industry.

13
14 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Vermont Working Lands
15 Enterprise Board and urges the close monitoring of the new Fund
16 it oversees. (2013)

17
18 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to prevent
19 unauthorized persons with fraudulent and false pretenses from
20 gaining access to agricultural production facilities by making such
21 activities a criminal offense. (2012)

22
23 **AGRICULTURE AGENCY**

2

24 Vermont Farm Bureau supports cooperation between the
25 Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the University
26 of Vermont and other institutions with laboratory facilities to
27 assure that the Vermont agricultural community has access to
28 laboratory facilities (such as diagnostic and pathology) for
29 agricultural science issues including animal health, public health,
30 seed and feed, and fertilizer. (2013)

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends the inclusion of the
33 Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation into the Agency of
34 Agriculture. (2011)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau recognizes that the Agency of
37 Agriculture supports the largest industry in this state and

1 requires the necessary resources to maintain its leadership and
2 regulatory oversight.

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the role of the Agency of
5 Agriculture in maintaining all oversight and enforcement of
6 regulations regarding permitting, environmental regulations and
7 inspections of farms and to allow time for current regulations to
8 realize their potential. (2013)

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Agency of Agriculture's
11 AAP's (Accepted Agricultural Practices) Regulations, the definition
12 of "farming" in 10 VSA 6001 (22), and the definition of "farm
13 system" in 30 VSA 219a. These should be used to define an
14 agricultural operation by all State agencies. (2010)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports making the Secretary of
17 Agriculture, Food and Markets (or his or her designee) a
18 permanent member of the University of Vermont's Board of
19 Trustees. (2008)

20
21 **ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES**

3

22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to control the use
23 of all terrain vehicles (ATV's). We favor compensation to property
24 owners for damage done by ATV's and appropriate fines for
25 negligent operation. We support ongoing educational efforts to
26 inform the general public of its responsibility to respect private
27 property and landowner rights.

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau urges that ATV's should be regulated
30 in similar manner as snow machines, including a provision for
31 policing of landowner permissions by organized clubs. (2002)

32
33 **BIOTECHNOLOGY**

4

34 Vermont Farm Bureau, recognizing the importance of
35 biotechnology to the future economic well being of the state,
36 encourages funding efforts to develop biotech industries. We
37 oppose placing prohibitions or undue restrictions on the
38 development of biotechnology products which have been deemed

1 safe and effective by appropriate regulatory agencies. Further, we
2 oppose creating lists of users of agricultural biotechnology, which
3 may target users unfairly.

4
5 The Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any legislation that would
6 restrict the uses of any product, biotech or organic, that has been
7 approved by the USDA, FDA, EPA, etc. We believe that existing
8 legal safeguards are adequate to protect all farmers. (2006)(2013)

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau calls upon the state of Vermont and
11 particularly the Agency of Agriculture to actively enforce the
12 genetically engineered seed labeling law by adopting clear rules
13 which state that such seeds must be labeled with the words
14 “genetically engineered” or “genetically modified” in a way that a
15 consumer will know, without a doubt, that the seeds contain
16 genetically-modified traits. (2005)

17
18 Vermont Farm Bureau supports unbiased, scientifically-
19 based evaluations concerning human and animal safety and
20 wholesomeness, as well as the environmental impacts of
21 biotechnology and the right of farmers to use these products
22 based on these evaluations.

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the right of individual
25 farmers to use modern technology in farming practices. (2010)

26
27 **COMMODITIES** **5**

28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation and
29 improvement of the Vermont state meat inspection program under
30 the direction of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and
31 Markets. We support national legislation to allow meat inspected
32 under the Vermont program to be sold in interstate commerce. We
33 support a meat grading system to be implemented, which will
34 enable livestock producers to expand their market. We encourage
35 the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to continue
36 to promote local and regional markets for Vermont livestock raised
37 for slaughter.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau urges passage of legislation which
2 eases the federal inspection process required for interstate
3 shipment of meat which already passes standards.
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Beef Promotion Board to
6 increase support of dairy beef. (2011)
7

8 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes vertical integration, when it
9 substantially reduces market competition in the beef industry.
10 (2006)
11

12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the American Farm Bureau
13 Federation request that the Congress and appropriate regulatory
14 agencies monitor commodity markets to prevent price
15 manipulation and promote an unencumbered free market for
16 agricultural products. (2011)
17

18 We urge that all non-producer owned agricultural processors
19 and handlers be bonded at no less than 60% of any claim value
20 for which they are found liable.
21

22 Funds for disaster relief and crop failure payments should be
23 paid directly to the affected farmer and may also apply to a
24 landowner if it is determined that the land had lost functional or
25 marketable value as a result of the disaster. Qualification for
26 disaster relief should be extended to isolated individual events,
27 instead of requiring whole county designations. (2001)
28

29 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Congress to provide
30 adequate funding for school breakfast and lunch programs
31 offering the choice of milk with all perishable food products to be
32 served at proper temperatures. We support programs such as the
33 Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program and the Special Milk
34 Program. (2012)
35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the continuation of the
37 Vermont "Farm to Family" coupon program because it is beneficial
38 to farmers and needy families.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the expansion of the “Farm
2 to Family” program for producer-only farmers markets to include
3 eggs, meat and dairy. (2007)
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau supports use of locally-produced food
6 in school lunch programs. (2002)
7

8 **CONSUMER PROTECTION** **6**

9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports including trucks with gross
10 vehicle weights of one ton or more and agricultural equipment
11 under Vermont’s lemon law statute.
12

13 Out-of-state fruits, vegetables and horticultural products
14 offered for sale in Vermont should bear signs clearly stating the
15 place of origin of such produce at the point of purchase. (2001)
16

17 Vermont Farm Bureau requests that produced or processed
18 foods should have a Country of Origin label. (2013)
19

20 **CROP & LIVESTOCK PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT** **7**

21 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that pesticide regulation
22 and pesticide monitoring programs remain in the control of the
23 Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.
24

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

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

1 **DAIRY**

8

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

12
13 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Dairy Security Act of
14 2011 or similar legislation that includes the following provisions:

- 15 1) Participation requirements that are either mandatory or at
16 least require the inclusion (of) nearly all production or a
17 requirement that would disallow participation in any other
18 Federal program if one chose not to participate.
- 19 2) Penalty provisions, all of which go to fund purchases of dairy
20 products to be made available to needy food programs.
- 21 3) Provisions to trigger in and out based on supply and demand
22 and retains no residual value.
- 23 4) Provisions that discourage production growth when the
24 program triggers in (no growth allowance provision). (2013)

25
26 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that any dairy farmer income
27 safety net program enacted should meet or exceed the benefits
28 provided to the Northeast dairy farmers over the last Decade.(2013)

29
30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the innovative development
31 of new dairy products and a way to profitably market these
32 products in a national and international market. (2010)

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the domestic production of
35 milk and dairy-based products that are currently being imported
36 into the United States. (2010)

37

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports working with cooperatives
2 and other agencies to retain the Federal milk Market Order
3 system. We oppose any reclassification of reconstituted milk
4 under the Federal Order program. Vermont Farm Bureau
5 supports reform to the price discovery mechanism for classified
6 pricing. (2010)

7
8 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves to work with dairy
9 cooperatives in supporting key issues and policies being developed
10 in the Vermont Legislature. (2010)

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that national dairy policy
13 include:

- 14 1) an increase in solids not fat (SNF) minimum standards in
15 fluid milk to match the California standards.
- 16 2) a promotion assessment equivalent to the domestic
17 promotion assessment levied on all imported products and
18 commodities. (2011)

19
20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the continuance of the
21 Federal Support Program and the MILC program until replaced.
22 (2012)

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a regional effort through
25 legislation to ensure that dairy farmers receive a fair share of the
26 consumer's dollar for fluid dairy products. (2009)

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the decrease of the industry
29 somatic cell count in fluid milk from dairy cows to 400,000
30 cells/ml to be competitive in the global marketplace. (2012)

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages Milk Promotion
33 Committees to facilitate placement of milk vending machines in
34 schools adjacent to lunch areas. Vermont Colleges should also be
35 encouraged to promote dairy sales through placement of vending
36 machines throughout their buildings. (2010)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that milk vending machines
2 purchased with milk promotion money should be filled exclusively
3 with dairy products, as defined by Vermont statute. (2006)
4

5 The federal school lunch program should be lobbied so they
6 would subsidize 10, 12 and 16 oz. containers of milk as part of the
7 school lunch program, as well as the 8 oz. cardboard container.
8 (2009)
9

10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the use of raw milk in the
11 production of cheese aged over sixty days. (2009)
12

13 Vermont Farm Bureau should ask the Vermont Legislature to
14 amend current law to require all raw milk be tested
15 commensurate with accepted risk, and that the producers be
16 inspected the same as commercial farms. (2008)
17

18 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any changes to the Capper-
19 Volstead Act that allows farmers to market milk collectively
20 without violating antitrust laws. (2007)
21

22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports truth in labeling that only
23 beverages produced by mammals be labeled as “milk.” (2010)
24

25 **DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS**

9

26 Recognizing the complexity of contracts for the sale or lease of
27 development rights, we urge that all agreements contain specific
28 time frames with a defined date of commencement and
29 termination not to exceed 25 years in length with all easements
30 and rights reverting to the original grantor or successor upon
31 expiration of the contract. (2011)
32

33 In the event that public funds are used to purchase
34 development rights, we believe that the following principles should
35 apply to the purchase:

- 36 1. Fair market value should be paid to the landowner.
- 37 2. All tax obligations should be fully disclosed and
- 38 explained prior to purchase.

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

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

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that property with
11 development rights removed should be taxed at its productive
12 agricultural or forestry value and the state Division of Property
13 Valuation and Review should publish and distribute guidelines to
14 assist local listers in equitably assessing these restricted lands.
15

16 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Vermont young farmers and
17 anyone interested in agricultural opportunities to use the
18 resources of the Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Land Link and
19 other similar organizations to pursue farming opportunities.
20

21 The designation of land as “prime agricultural soils” should
22 not be the sole reason for a zoning or land use review board to
23 reject a proposed development. At the very least, a developer
24 should be granted the option of off-site mitigation by adding an
25 equivalent area of land to an ongoing farming operation. (2006)
26

27 The Vermont Land Trust and similar agencies should be
28 encouraged to foster small-scale agriculture or commercial
29 greenhouse and garden operations by assisting in conservation of
30 small parcels in high-impact areas. (2006)
31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued funding of the
33 Vermont Housing Conservation Board. We oppose lowering the
34 initial stewardship allocation and support the requirement that the
35 easement holder pays continuing stewardship costs. (2012)
36
37
38

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

2 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the livestock industry to
3 adopt a nationwide Johnes disease program to protect the health
4 of farm animals, farm families and the public and to maintain
5 public confidence in beef and dairy markets.
6

7 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuous appropriations
8 from the Vermont Legislature to study, educate and train the
9 agricultural community about Johnes disease. (2010)
10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the removal of the
12 responsibility for licensing and regulations of pet shops from the
13 State Veterinarian. (2002)
14

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

25 We support a diverse and healthy wildlife population in
26 Vermont. Vermont Farm Bureau actively supports state, regional
27 and national policies that recognize that farm animals and
28 agricultural crops are at least as important as wildlife. We urge
29 that management policies recognize the priority of protecting both
30 public safety and the economic viability of agricultural enterprises
31 from diseases such as rabies, giardia and distemper. Further, we
32 urge that policies protect agriculture from predators which cause
33 economic harm and threaten crops and domestic animals. (2012)
34

35 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends the Vermont Fish and
36 Wildlife Department pay farmers for proven losses to dairy cattle,
37 beef cattle and sheep from coyote attacks. Suggested
38 compensation: \$1800 dairy cows; \$1,000 beef cows; \$300+ pro-

1 rated for young stock; \$200 adult sheep; \$100+ lambs and older
2 lambs pro-rated. Plus, institute a \$100 bounty on coyotes until
3 the populations are controlled. (2010)
4

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

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

13 **EDUCATION**

11

14 Vermont Farm Bureau asks UVM and all land grant colleges
15 to require all students to take a course offered by the College of
16 Agriculture that covers issues such as how food is produced, what
17 is required for inputs and how much land is needed to feed the
18 world in a fair and balanced way. (2011)
19

20 Vermont Farm Bureau requests that the Governor appoint at
21 least one active farmer to the University of Vermont Board of
22 Trustees. (2011)
23

24 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Vermont Department of
25 Education to recognize the importance of agricultural knowledge
26 at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels and
27 provide both financial and technical support for Agriculture in the
28 Classroom program.
29

30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports agricultural and natural
31 resource education and establishing agricultural and natural
32 resource education programs at regional technical centers and
33 high schools. (amended 2008) The Vermont Department of
34 Education shall continue to fund and support the FFA
35 agricultural advisor position. (2003, 2005) (2012)
36

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports and encourages agriculture
2 education in the classroom and the use of local farm products in
3 our schools. (2009)
4

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

10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the full funding of the
11 National Veterinary Service Act of 2003 and the establishment and
12 full funding of a Vermont net tuition repayment program for large
13 animal vets in underserved areas. (2008)
14

15 We urge creation of an accredited four-year professional
16 development course for agriculture teachers. (2012)
17

18 Vermont Farm Bureau calls for the establishment of a
19 permanent clearinghouse for the collection and distribution of
20 curriculum materials and educational resources on agriculture,
21 including videos, computer software, internet sites and farm tour
22 information to be staffed collaboratively by the Vermont
23 Department of Education and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture,
24 Food and Markets. (2012)
25

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

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

36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an apprenticeship program
37 to train slaughterhouse personnel by the University of Vermont

1 (UVM), Vermont Technical College (VTC), vocational centers or any
2 combination thereof. (2012)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the growth of farm
5 apprenticeship programs in Vermont institutions and
6 organizations for the purpose of gaining on-farm practical
7 experience for those students with an interest in the future in the
8 ag industry. (2013)

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the designated “Spire of
11 Excellence” for food systems at UVM. (2013)

12
13 Vermont Farm Bureau supports increased funding for
14 agricultural programs at VTC, including the 2 plus 2 (FARMS)
15 program offered in cooperation with the University of Vermont. We
16 support a seamless transition between the two institutions for the
17 2 plus 2 program. We further support continued funding for
18 scholarships in the 2 plus 2 program. (2012) (2013)

19
20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports UVM’s College of Agriculture
21 Dairy Center of Excellence. (2010)

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an agriculture teaching
24 program at VTC in conjunction with a state college teaching
25 program. (2009)

26
27 Vermont Farm Bureau supports adequate state funding of
28 special education. (2012)

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

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports local control of schools.
35 (2012)

36
37 Vermont Farm Bureau supports school choice and those
38 programs that recognize and hold school systems accountable for

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

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau recognizes the statewide Farm to Plate
5 initiative and will work to educate its' members on the goals and
6 objectives as well as participate in the working groups when
7 possible. (2011)

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

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

15
16 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

12

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

- 21 1) Require state cost sharing and compensation for species
22 preservation. (2011)
- 23 2) Change the method by which species are added to the
24 threatened or endangered list by making the process more
25 specific and providing automatic annual de-listing of
26 species.
- 27 3) Provide incentives and/or compensation to private
28 landowners where threatened or endangered species are
29 located.
- 30 4) Include business representatives and landowners on the
31 Endangered Species Advisory Committee.
- 32 5) Consider gene banking as an option for preserving species.
33 (2012)

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes listing the lynx, wolf or the
36 Indiana Bat as endangered or threatened species. (2011)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the reintroduction of wolves
2 into Vermont. (2010)

3
4
5 **ENERGY/UTILITIES**

13

6 Vermont Farm Bureau should be actively involved in any
7 future restructuring of Vermont's electric utilities. Vermont Farm
8 Bureau supports:

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

22 Vermont Farm Bureau does not support inclining block
23 electric rates. (2013)

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau favors efforts to maintain or lower
26 electric rates in Vermont. (2009)

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports production of renewable
29 electricity on farms at a rate of return on investment equal to or
30 greater than that supported by the Public Service Board for other
31 utilities. (2009)

32
33 Vermont Farm Bureau urges support for regional and
34 national efforts to develop sources of renewable energy from
35 agricultural production and land and also to include wind, solar,
36 fiber and hydro, as a priority national energy policy, as is
37 promoted by the 25 by 25 initiative. Vermont Farm Bureau
38 supports tax breaks and other incentives directed towards

1 renewable on farm energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro,
2 biodiesel, biogas, methane and methane digesters, and wood chip
3 systems, and the development of educational programs that
4 provide technical advice in these technologies. (2010)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the use of approved outdoor
7 furnaces and should work to ensure that any regulations
8 developed are favorable to the agriculture and forestry
9 communities. (2012)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports facilitating the building of
12 energy projects using woody biomass as fuel, including
13 commercial pellet manufacturing. (2013)

14
15 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that fluorescent light
16 bulbs be included in the hazardous waste special drop programs
17 sponsored by Solid Waste Districts around the state. (2007)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports net metering. (2008) (2013)

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau supports electric utilities charging an
22 appropriate fee to the net metering customer to cover their costs
23 associated with supplying electricity to the net metering customer
24 when the customers demand for electric power exceeds the net
25 metering generation. (2013)

26
27 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the Federal increase in the
28 percentage of ethanol in gasoline. (2010)(2012)

29
30 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves to urge the State of Vermont
31 and Vermont Farm Bureau to do all they can to stabilize carbon
32 dioxide levels in the atmosphere by promoting alternative energy
33 systems and efficient heating and transportation methods. (2010)

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the safe and timely
36 decommissioning of Vermont Yankee and consideration of
37 alternative fuels for power generation at the site. (2013)

1 **ENVIRONMENT**

14

2 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Congress to clarify and affirm
3 that agriculture is not subject to the Comprehensive
4 Environmental and Liability Act (CERCLA), nor to the
5 Environmental Planning and Community Right to Know Act
6 (EPCRA), correcting misinterpretations of these acts by the
7 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2007)

8
9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a requirement that all EPA
10 regulations, rule making and procedures adopted regarding
11 agriculture and forestry be based on solid, peer-reviewed data and
12 that the requirements derived from both the Clean Air Act and the
13 Clean Water Act include standards-based performance goals
14 based on sound science with data subject to peer review. We also
15 request our Congressional delegation to support requiring a cost-
16 benefit analysis before implementation of all such regulation.
17 (2010)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau should promote the image of Vermont
20 farms as environmentally friendly, sustainable users of the land.

21
22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the development of a suitable
23 no cost disposal program for discarded tires and a recycling
24 program for agricultural plastic waste. (2013)

25
26 All regulations governing the uses of Vermont farm and
27 forestland should explicitly acknowledge that evidences of human
28 activity are a necessary, pleasing and desirable part of the natural
29 landscape.

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports climate change legislation
32 with Cap and Trade language that could create additional revenue
33 for the agriculture industry. Agriculture should not be included
34 under the cap. (2008)

1 **EQUINE**

15

2 Vermont Farm Bureau aggressively supports full and equal
3 status within agriculture for Vermont’s equine owners. To achieve
4 such status, we support:

- 5 1) Equine property being eligible as Agricultural property in
6 UVA.
- 7 2) Inclusion of the equine owners under the agricultural sales
8 tax exemptions.
- 9 3) Maintaining an active equine committee within Vermont
10 Farm Bureau.
- 11 4) Trails, parking areas and camping sites for equine activity
12 being made available in Green Mountain National Forest
13 and state parklands. (2013)
- 14 5) Developing an expanded definition of farmer to include
15 equine businesses as farming operations. (2010) (2013)

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports revision of the Vermont
18 Equine statute to set limitations of liability per incident. (2010)

19
20 **FINANCE**

16

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

27
28 Farm Credit agencies should not be bought and sold out of
29 the control of the farmers involved. (2011)

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports efforts of the Farm Credit
32 System to insure that adequate credit is available for agriculture.
33 (2006)

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages increased funding by the
36 USDA, in the form of low-interest loans and grants, to be used for
37 alternative manure management practices (i.e. anaerobic
38 digesters). (2007)

1 **FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY**

17

2 While Vermont Farm Bureau does not support the current
3 (2013 Draft) Food Safety regulation we support initiatives to
4 improve and streamline food safety to insure that policies and
5 procedures are in place that build trust and reliability in U.S.
6 agriculture. In addition to supporting good agricultural practices
7 (GAP) we support guidelines that are tailored to the size, type and
8 capacity of the farm. (2013)

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the same regulatory and
11 safety standards required for domestically-grown products be
12 required for imported products in order to protect consumer safety
13 and prevent economic advantages. (2013)

14
15 **FORESTRY**

18

16 Recognizing the importance of working forests, and the
17 products harvested and manufactured from working forests, are
18 important for absorbing and storing greenhouse gases, the
19 Vermont Farm Bureau asks the U.S. Forest Service to study and
20 prepare estimates, as to the potential of Forest Service lands to
21 absorb and store greenhouse gases, when managed as working
22 forests, as compared with unmanaged wilderness forests.
23 Similarly, the U.S. Forest Service should study and estimate the
24 adverse effects on air quality and wildlife, from wildfire on Forest
25 Service lands; and to estimate the differences between managed
26 and unmanaged lands. (2011)

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation of traditional
29 uses on the former Champion Paper company land and all State
30 Forestland for recreational and commercial uses. (2011)

31
32 We support exclusive use of Vermont's Acceptable
33 Management Practices (AMP's) to evaluate whether timber
34 harvesting conforms with environmental quality standards. (2006)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports amendments to Act 170,
37 Chapter 87 that includes removal of any stipulation including, but
38 not limited to, Mandatory Harvesting Guidelines for landowners

1 enrolled in Use Value Appraisal (Current Use). Furthermore, VFB
2 supports no rules or harvesting standards be enacted until it is
3 proven independently that harvesting methods and management
4 standards in place now are inadequate to protect forest health and
5 water quality. Said rules should also take into account the
6 economic impact on timber harvesters who must follow them.
7 VFB also requests that the Senate Natural Resources Committee
8 take testimony from landowners, end users and timber harvesters
9 during the amendment process. (2012)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports landowner-based Green
12 marketing initiatives which promote use of timber sourced from
13 sustainably-managed and privately-owned North American
14 woodlands, such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and
15 the American Tree Farm Systems PEFC certification. (2010)

16
17 Farmers should not be required to obtain zoning permits or
18 environmental review before converting forested land to
19 agricultural uses. (2011)

20
21 Forestland, like all agricultural land, must be economically
22 sustainable to remain viable. In order to maintain forests as a vital
23 part of Vermont's working rural landscape, we urge that the
24 following principles apply to all Federal, state and local zoning and
25 planning policy regarding forestland:

- 26
27 1) The average annual harvest of forest products should
28 approximate the long-term average annual growth of those
29 forest products.
30 2) Forestland must be assessed for tax purposes at use value.
31 3) All generally-accepted silvicultural tools, including clear
32 cutting and aerial spraying, must be available to owners of
33 forestland.
34 4) In order to promote development of robust value-added
35 wood manufacturing enterprises in rural towns, Vermont
36 should devise business-friendly legal, transportation,
37 energy, communication, economic, tax and regulatory
38 policies. (2006)

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

3
4 All government land acquisitions should meet the following
5 conditions:

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

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining forest roads on
18 public lands and designation of no additional roadless areas.
19 Regulations of such roads should be by rule of USDA Forest
20 Service, and not transferred to EPA jurisdiction. (2013)

21
22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports sustainable timber harvest in
23 the Green Mountain National Forest. (2003)

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the Wild Lands Project or any
26 analogous attempt to depopulate forested land in the Northeast
27 Kingdom of Vermont. (2006)

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the Conservation and
30 Reinvestment Act (CARA) or any similar acts and recognizes that
31 the private ownership of property is the foundation of a
32 prosperous economy and a free society. Vermont Farm Bureau
33 opposes expanded government ownership of working rural lands
34 because of the threat to the resource base of the farm and forest
35 industries, the threat to the tax base of many rural communities
36 and in some cases, the threat to the survival of rural
37 communities.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the promotion and
2 maintenance of current sawmills and encourages development of
3 new sites. (2003)
4

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

- 11 1) Ban on untreated woody materials such as blocking or
12 pallets from China and other countries with potential
13 insect invaders;
- 14 2) Monitoring of populations, both visual and using
15 pheromone traps;
- 16 3) Removal and disposal of all infected trees or clearing of
17 infested sites with appropriate quarantines and
18 enforcement;
- 19 4) Incorporation of identification and eradication information
20 into all continuing education programs conducted for
21 farmers, foresters, loggers and the general public,
22 including displays at fairs, conventions and other public
23 events. (2010)
24

25 **GOVERNMENT - MISCELLANEOUS**

19

26 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the reaffirmation of the
27 fundamental practice of political power and participation
28 beginning with and flowing from the people at the local level.
29

30 Vermont Farm Bureau urges that public hearings affecting
31 farmers be fully and prominently warned and held in locations
32 and at times to maximize participation by farmers.
33

34 We oppose all unfunded government mandates and request
35 the Legislature to request an annual report from Vermont's
36 congressional delegation regarding the cost of new federal laws
37 and regulations.
38

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to prohibit
2 transfer of funds for use contrary to the designated purpose of
3 such funds.
4

5 **GOVERNMENT – STATE**

20

6 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that:

- 7 1) All appointments to House Committees and Chairs of those
8 Committees in the Vermont House of Representatives
9 should be made by a three (3) member committee
10 consisting of the Speaker, the Majority and the Minority
11 leader.
- 12 2) Any bill that would increase taxes should require a super-
13 majority of at least 60 percent in both the Vermont House
14 and Senate in order to become law.
- 15 3) Issues dealing with agriculture be debated on their own
16 merit and not held hostage by other non-germane issues.

17
18 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes taking funds from the
19 property tax abatement programs for other purposes (2012)
20

21 **HEALTH**

21

22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislative efforts to address
23 the cost crisis in health care and to make health insurance
24 available and affordable to all Vermonters. (2011)

25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports these considerations to be
26 included in any restructuring of health care by the U.S. Congress:

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

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports any new healthcare initiative
37 to use net income to determine eligibility and premiums if income
38 sensitivity is used as an indicator. (2012)(2013)

1
2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislative efforts to provide a
3 healthcare program that emphasizes free market competition and
4 consumer freedom of choice. (2012)
5

6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the repeal of the requirement
7 that small business issue a 1099 to all vendors and service
8 providers supply more than \$600 of business during a calendar
9 year. (2012)
10

11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining our rural
12 hospitals.
13

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

23 We urge further study of the role of animal fats and
24 hydrogenated vegetable oils in human health. The Vermont Farm
25 Bureau requests that research regarding the positive relationship
26 between intake of dairy products and bone density measurements
27 throughout the human life span be done before any change in the
28 recommended intake of dairy products, particularly of milk as a
29 beverage of choice, during periods of growth. (2012)
30

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

1 **LABOR**

22

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

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports subdividing worker
13 compensation class codes to more accurately reflect exposures to
14 employees working in the Vermont equine industry. (2013)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau continues to support workers
17 compensation reform initiatives. (2013)

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

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

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

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to exempt
2 payment of unemployment benefits to seasonal employees, except
3 during the seasonal period of employment. Further, we oppose
4 any increase in unemployment benefits.

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

14
15 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports AgJOBS legislation
16 as introduced in the U.S. House and Senate. (2012)

17
18 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves that Vermont farm employers
19 should not be responsible for the no-match IDs of employees or
20 subject to any penalties as a result. (2007)

21
22 Vermont Farm Bureau supports aggressive action to improve
23 the availability of foreign guest workers for dairy and other year-
24 round agricultural operations by:

- 25 1) Urging Congress to create a year-round guest worker
26 category for dairy farm workers, not to include a provision
27 to deport all current immigrants. This category would be
28 determined by a much-simplified determination of need.
- 29 2) Improving our Federal H2a guest worker program. (2012)

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly encourages a coordinated
32 federal policy that supports the H2A program for seasonal guest
33 workers for orchard, vegetable, fruit and other agricultural
34 operations. (2011)

35 Vermont Farm Bureau asks the U.S. Department of Labor to
36 clarify child labor laws so that children of parents who are part
37 owners of a farm can work on that farm. (2011)

1 **LEGAL/LIABILITY**

23

2 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Legislature to minimize the
3 legal tort liability of agricultural businesses as it adds undue costs
4 and is contrary to the public interest.

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports protecting private property
7 owners from lawsuits by persons who enter their property with or
8 without permission.

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Legislature to replace the
11 “willful and wanton misconduct” standard with an “intentional
12 infliction of harm” standard in the so-called Landowner Liability
13 statute.

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

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

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

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

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

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

10
11 **LIVESTOCK**

24

12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the promotion of good animal
13 care practices.

14
15 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a code of ethics for livestock
16 shows, and encourages the enforcement by the show
17 superintendent. (2005)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that any mandatory uniform
20 national livestock ID program should be supported by federal
21 funds. (2005)

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports premise registration and
24 other farm-friendly measures that seek to reduce the risk of
25 diseases and other biohazard outbreaks and that in no way
26 burdens or discourages agriculture in the State of Vermont. (2006)

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports including non-surgical
29 implantation of embryos as a non-veterinary technique in
30 Vermont veterinary standards.

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation allowing trained
33 technicians, with a veterinarian's approval, to implant embryos in
34 farm animals. (2007)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the FDA to make available,
37 without prescription, more commonly used livestock drugs that
38 have proven safety records. (2003)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau requests that the Vermont livestock
2 inspection division create a written, consistent protocol for
3 portable slaughterhouse businesses that would allow these
4 businesses to operate on farms and produce meat that is saleable
5 within the state. (2003)

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau urges the Vermont Livestock Care
8 Standards Advisory Council to review proposed animal welfare
9 legislation and make recommendations to the Legislature based
10 on the Councils review. (2012) (2013)

11
12 **MAPLE**

25

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

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the new grading standards
18 for maple syrup as referenced in the document distributed at
19 informational meetings by the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers
20 Association in October 2012. We encourage the Vermont
21 Secretary of Agriculture to adopt these standards. (2012)

22
23 We believe that the Vermont maple industry is adequately
24 regulated to insure the highest standards of quality and protect
25 the public health. We also support the free and voluntary
26 registration of sugar makers by county to assist the Vermont
27 Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in its work.

28
29 Acknowledging the critical importance of Vermont's maple
30 industry to tourism and our economy, Vermont Farm Bureau
31 supports adequate public funding for maple industry research,
32 including the Proctor Maple Research Laboratory.

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the ongoing development of
35 criteria for the use of public lands in Vermont for maple sap
36 harvesting and urges state agencies to cooperate with the Vermont
37 Maple Industry Council in their development.

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a voluntary certification
2 program for maple syrup producers. (2011)

3
4 **ORGANIC**

26

5 Vermont Farm Bureau recognizes the advancement of organic
6 agriculture in the state and urges the Vermont State Legislature to
7 support the Ag Agency, the University of Vermont and the
8 Vermont Technical College in research and development of organic
9 production techniques. (2005)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports keeping organic standards
12 strictly organic and not allowing some drugs or non organic feed
13 to be used when retaining a certified organic label. (2013)

14
15 Vermont Farm Bureau supports certified farmers ability to
16 participate in their certification management boards. (2013)

17
18 Vermont Farm Bureau supports imported organic labeling be
19 subject to the same standards as U.S. organic labeling. (2013)

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the Organic Materials Review
22 Institute list of approved materials to be the same for the USDA's
23 approved list. (2013)

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages organic farmers working
26 with neighbors and other farmers on boundary issues. (2013)

27
28 **PLANNING**

27

29 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes government acquisition of
30 agricultural lands for uses such as landfills, septic systems and
31 roads as being contrary to the priority of preserving our rural
32 landscape. We support the adoption of a standard definition of
33 "prime agricultural soils" incorporating an analysis of such
34 considerations as critical mass, proximity to adjacent farms,
35 economic viability and farm services.

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

4
5 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Farm Bureau members to serve
6 on local and regional planning and zoning commissions to work to
7 inform and educate these boards on issues of importance to
8 agriculture. We support a simple appeals process at all levels.

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued exemption from
11 local zoning and Act 250 for agricultural improvements. (2006)

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

- 14 1) Vermont land gains tax
- 15 2) On-site septic regulations
- 16 3) Act 250 road-building regulations
- 17 4) Property taxes on farm land

18 **PROPERTY OWNERS' RIGHTS**

19 **28**

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

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau favors the right of landowners to
25 remove gravel from streams to keep them from flooding and
26 eroding and that this channel management tool is considered as
27 one option when a problem is being assessed. (2010)

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau supports working with the Agency of
30 Transportation and Agency of Natural Resources on a systematic
31 plan to identify where the river channels are located and maintain
32 those channels. (2011)

33
34 Restrictions on the ownership or use of private property by
35 government should be made only in cases of compelling public
36 interest.

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

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

11 Any rule-making committee, governmental agency or
12 legislative body of federal, state and local authority which enforces
13 rules and regulations which reduces the value of private property
14 shall reimburse the property owner for lost value and the
15 municipality for lost tax revenue. Such decrease in values shall be
16 determined by the local board of civil authority through the tax
17 appeal process and the entity responsible for the loss shall pay the
18 cost.
19

20 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the use of government
21 condemnation powers to seize private property for recreation
22 trails.
23

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

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

35 Ownership of abandoned rights of way should revert to
36 abutting landowners. When a new use is proposed in such rights
37 of way, then a new right of way agreement shall be negotiated.
38 When abandoned rights of way are acquired by government after

1 compensation to the abutting landowners, we urge that all
2 maintenance, including fences, be adequately maintained by
3 government. (2006)
4

5 We support a law to require agencies of government to notify
6 owners of private property by certified mail 30 days before any
7 consideration of any proposed restriction, inclusion of the land in
8 a government inventory, map or plan, or any action that affects
9 the use or value of the property. We urge that all agencies of
10 government respect the right of private property owners to review
11 any such proposals and their right to appeal any decision to a
12 higher authority or the courts, and that violators of the law receive
13 prompt investigation and adjudication.
14

15 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to prohibit well
16 head protection areas being created on anyone's property without
17 their written permission. (2013)
18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau believes there should be appropriate
20 and immediate enforcement of trespassing laws with penalties to
21 enable and compel law enforcement authorities to assist
22 landowners in protecting property from unwanted trespassers.
23 (2007)
24

25 We believe that private property is private and that
26 governmental officials and the public must obtain permission from
27 property owners before entering private property for any purpose.
28

29 We support the right of private property owners to post their
30 land.
31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the efforts of Vermont
33 Traditions Coalition to make sure that management on public
34 lands is supportive of individual property rights, and to strengthen
35 a coalition of farming, forestry, hunting and outdoor sporting
36 interests. (2003)
37

1 The Vermont Legislature should adopt a law, as urged by the
2 U.S. Supreme Court in *Kelo v. New London*, restricting the use of
3 powers of eminent domain to cases of public necessity. Property
4 taken by eminent domain should be the smallest quantity
5 necessary for the stated use, and should be devoted entirely to
6 public use. Government should never seize property for the
7 purpose of transferring to a second private party. (2010)

8
9 **RECREATION** **29**

10 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that farm and forestlands are
11 first and foremost for farm and forest production. We
12 acknowledge, however, that many private property owners
13 voluntarily allow public access to their land for recreation of all
14 kinds and for public rights of way and that in return it is fair and
15 reasonable that the following conditions apply to such access:

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

29
30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation and regulation
31 that would preserve and facilitate the continued use of public
32 lands including wilderness areas and other specifically designated
33 areas for horse trails, pack and saddle stock animals and other
34 recreational pursuits. (2013)

35
36 **REGULATION** **30**

37 Vermont Farm Bureau supports oversight of agriculture by
38 the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets on all

1 issues affecting agriculture. Further, we support exempting
2 agriculture from Act 250 as being fundamentally in the public
3 interest.
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a change in law with respect
6 to Act 250. For land in which development is proposed to occur
7 that is devoted to agriculture or forest management, any
8 restrictions or conditions placed on the development in order to
9 obtain an Act 250 permit shall apply only to the portion of the
10 property involved in the development and forestry and agricultural
11 uses can continue without restrictions or encumbrances. (2005)
12

13 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that manure pits should not
14 be assumed to be leaking unless that assumption is verified by
15 testing. (2011)
16

17 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that natural emissions from
18 agriculture should not be regulated under national air quality
19 standards. (2005)
20

21 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports 24 VSA, SEC 4413
22 entitled "Limitations on Municipal Bylaws." (2006)
23

24 Vermont Farm Bureau favors the right of landowners to have
25 the right to cut their tress in the road right of way without having
26 to get a permit from the town.
27

28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislative changes creating a
29 statute of limitations of 7 years for state subdivision permit
30 violations where such action was not willful and where there is no
31 threat to the public health and safety.
32

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

- 36 1) Those enterprises are involved primarily in production,
37 preparation or packaging farm products harvested on the
38 premises.

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

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports exempting existing gravel
5 pits from Act 250 review.

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau favors legislation to streamline the
8 present environmental permitting process by providing more
9 information to permit applicants, and avoiding duplication,
10 unnecessary delays and frivolous appeals.

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports expedited approval for
13 communications facilities, including cell towers, which may be
14 based in or upon existing farm structures, or land. (2001)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining the right of
17 farmers to contract for cell towers on conserved land without
18 penalty. (2002)

19
20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuing efforts by the
21 Agency of Agriculture working with the Department of
22 Environmental Conservation to streamline the burdensome
23 permitting process for slaughterhouses in Vermont.

24
25 We support exempting farms with fewer than 10 employees
26 from OSHA regulations.

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau supports reciprocity for pesticide
29 applicators, if they are certified in a bordering state.

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports reciprocity of a well drilling
32 license between Vermont and neighboring states.

33 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the following provisions for
34 the regulation of large farming operations (LFO's):

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

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the creation of an
2 agricultural exemption allowing agricultural ventures to have both
3 port-o-lets and state-approved septic systems. (2003)
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes mitigation of primary ag soils.
6 (2006)
7

8 VFB believes that criterion 9(b) primary ag soils should be
9 eliminated from the Act 250 environmental development law.
10

11 **RIGHT TO FARM AND PRACTICE FORESTRY** **31**

12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports:

- 13 1) The right of Vermont private property owners to produce
14 and market agricultural products in a positive way that
15 promotes Vermont agriculture.
- 16 2) A farmer's right to choose agricultural methods, including
17 modern technologies, providing that Accepted Agricultural
18 Practices (AAP's) and Accepted Management Practices
19 (AMP's) are practiced. (2011)
- 20 3) Actions to insure that farmers be protected from undue
21 liability and nuisance suits when carrying out such
22 practices.
- 23 4) Informing all purchasers of Vermont property of a private
24 property owner's fundamental "right to farm" within
25 "Accepted Agricultural Practices."
- 26 5) The Agency of Agriculture establishing a variance process
27 in regards to AAP regulations. (2013)
28

29 Vermont Farm Bureau should continue efforts to strengthen
30 the state's right to farm law. (2005)
31

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports only the Secretary of
33 Agriculture, not towns or other municipalities setting the
34 standards for nuisance issues of noise, odor, traffic, flies and
35 other pests on all agricultural operations. (2008)
36

37 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the introduction of
38 legislation that would require that homebuyers who move next to

1 farms be informed that agriculture can be noisy, odiferous, dusty
2 – and that farmers have a right to farm and require developers
3 and real estate agents to inform potential buyers about Vermont’s
4 right to farm whenever property changes hands. (2008)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continuation of the Large
7 and Medium Farm Operation laws with an appropriate level of
8 review by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets of
9 large livestock operations and the impacts these have on the
10 environment and the community. We will do whatever is
11 necessary to keep all agriculture oversight within the Vermont
12 Agency of Agriculture. (2011)

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

18 **SEAL OF QUALITY**

19 **32**

20 Vermont Farm Bureau supports re-institution within the
21 Agency of Agriculture of a Seal of Quality program for the purpose
22 of promoting Vermont-grown or Vermont-processed foods and food
23 products. Farmers and local food processors should be included
24 in the rule-making and administrative oversight committees under
25 this program. (2013)

26 **SOLID WASTE/RESIDUALS**

27 **33**

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

- 34 1) development of effective recycling for farm-generated
35 residuals, such as plastics
- 36 2) allowing farm-generated residuals that are composted on
37 the farm to be done without permits under accepted ag
38 practices;

- 1 3) permitting of composting with guidelines for accepting
2 compostable waste from off a particular farm;
3 4) encouragement of businesses assisting farms in disposal of
4 farm residuals. (2013)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau requests the Agency of Agriculture
7 return to the position that composting of off-farm food scraps on
8 the farm is an Acceptable Agricultural Practice (AAP). (2013)

9
10 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages increased funding by
11 USDA in the form of low-interest loans and grants to be used for
12 anaerobic digesters. (2009)

13
14 **TAXATION - MISCELLANEOUS 34**

15 Vermont Farm Bureau favors repeal of inheritance taxes, as
16 they are an unfair second tax on assets which works against
17 future generations continuing family farm operations. Absent
18 outright repeal, we support increasing the federal exemption.
19 (2012)

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau supports Federal Bill #5320, the
22 “Growing Small Farms Act of 2012” which increases the Federal
23 Unemployment tax exemption for agricultural employers from the
24 current \$20,000 per quarter set in 1976, to \$40,000 per quarter.
25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the State of Vermont using the
26 same exemption if the Feds extend theirs. (2012)

27
28 Vermont Farm Bureau asks that the State of Vermont
29 establish a state estate tax exemption the same as the federal.
30 (2013)

31
32 Estate taxes on agricultural and forestland should be based
33 on current use, rather than on fair market value.

34
35 Vermont Farm Bureau supports exempting farms from estate
36 taxes upon death of the owner, as long as the ownership stays
37 within the family. (2011)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports simplification of the federal
2 tax code. (2011)

3
4 The gift tax exemption should be raised to \$20,000 per
5 person, per year.

6
7 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports continuation of the
8 retail sales tax exemption for agricultural items, and we oppose
9 local and state taxes on farm machinery used for custom work.

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining sales tax
12 exemptions for farm machinery. (2012)

13
14 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the drafting of legislation
15 that would allow motorized vehicles registered as agricultural
16 vehicles to be exempt from the Vermont sales tax. (2005)

17
18 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the addition of a sales tax to
19 gasoline. (2011)

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that the State of Vermont
22 should eliminate the state capital gains tax on the first \$10,000
23 on long-term investment.

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the reinstatement of the
26 Federal Investment Tax Credit for farm equipment and adopting a
27 Vermont investment tax credit that includes and enhances
28 opportunities for processing Vermont-grown agriculture and forest
29 products.

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes the minimum entity tax on
32 partnerships.

33
34 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that college expenses should
35 be deductible expenses on individual tax returns.

36
37 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes decoupling the state income
38 tax from the federal income tax.

1
2 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a sales tax exemption for
3 building materials used for agricultural construction and/or
4 renovations. (2012) (2013)

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes a federal value-added tax.
7 (2009)

8
9 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the rebate of state tax paid
10 on fuel used in vehicles registered with an agricultural plate.
11 (2009)

12
13 **TAXATION – PROPERTY (2001 Section rewrite) 35**

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

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports use value appraisal for all
18 land growing farm and forest products. This should be Vermont
19 Tax policy, not a program. (2011)

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that farm and forest land
22 should not carry the burden of funding education and that
23 residential property should share equally in supporting education.

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau proposes that agricultural structures,
26 including qualified equine structures, be exempt from the property
27 tax.

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an education finance reform
30 plan, calling on the Governor and Legislature to repeal current
31 education funding laws and enact a new law that incorporates all
32 or some of the following specific recommendations:

- 33 a) Relies less heavily on property taxes.
34 b) Controls education spending without interfering with local
35 decision-making.
36 c) Provides our schools with the resources they need to
37 educate our children.

- 1 d) Fairly distributes resources and tax burdens throughout
- 2 our state.
- 3 e) Supports the current use program or use value appraisal
- 4 for farmland.
- 5 f) Supports a plan to allow districts to combine to reduce the
- 6 number of Supervisory Districts. (2006)

7 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes capital gains tax policy that
8 gives a competitive advantage to Land Trusts and Environmental
9 Groups in the purchase of rural land and other property. (2003)

10
11 **TAXATION/USE VALUE (2001 Section rewrite) 36**

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

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports including horse farms in the
18 definition of farming for the purposes of the Current Use Tax
19 program. (2013)

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an ag-use appraisal system
22 for small-scale ag. (2007)

23
24 Vermont Farm Bureau supports permanent continuation of
25 use value appraisal, at values established by the Current Use
26 Advisory Board.

27
28 If the present program is changed in any way, we support
29 participants being allowed to exit with no penalty and reducing or
30 removing the penalty on land removed from use value appraisal.
31 We oppose restrictions such as public access without owner
32 permission including the posting of property and urge that:

- 33 1) "Potential" and "prospective" be deleted from the definition
- 34 of appraisal value.
- 35 2) Property assessments should reflect encumbrances and
- 36 restrictions imposed by law or regulation including
- 37 easements, Accepted Management Practices, Accepted

1 Agricultural Practices, EPA regulations and zoning/town
2 plans.

- 3 3) Farm and forest land should be assessed at its ability to
4 produce food and fiber.
- 5 4) Elimination of education taxes on working farm and forest
6 lands. (2002)
- 7 5) Participants in Use Value Appraisal not be disqualified if
8 their lands are operated for the purposes of fee hunting
9 and fishing. (2003)

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the concept that land fully
12 conserved by grants of conservation easements should be valued
13 on the Grand List at use value and not included in the Current
14 Use Program. (2010)

15
16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the lien placed against the
17 deed of a Current Use Program participant to be considered under
18 law as a binding contract. (2011)

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

25
26 Vermont Farm Bureau supports allowing a landowner in the
27 Current Use Program to relocate an undeveloped, withdrawn site
28 of two acres or less, once within an enrolled parcel, without
29 incurring the Land Use Change Tax, provided there is no
30 reduction in the area of enrolled land. (2011)

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an “easy out” (all out) in any
33 Current Use legislation that recognizes that the program is a
34 contract between the State of Vermont and the landowner, and
35 that changes should never be made unilaterally without the
36 opportunity for parties to withdraw without penalty. (2011)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the State setting the penalty
2 for land withdrawal from the Current Use Program, not the
3 individual Town Listers. (2011)
4

5 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a tiered approach to the
6 LUCT (Land Use Change Tax) based on years of enrollment, such
7 as 10% for 0 to 12 years in the program, 5% for 13 to 20 years
8 and 3% for more than 20 years. (2011)(2012)(2013)
9

10 Vermont Farm Bureau supports establishment of an appeal
11 process within the State Department of Forests and Parks in
12 relation to the Use Value Appraisal Program to allow an appeal of
13 an adverse inspection report before disenrollment from the
14 program. (2012)(2013)
15

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports amendments to Act 170,
17 Chapter 87 that includes removal of any stipulation including, but
18 not limited to, Mandatory Harvesting Guidelines for landowners
19 enrolled in Use Value Appraisal (Current Use). Furthermore, VFB
20 supports no rules or harvesting standards be enacted until it is
21 proven independently that harvesting methods and management
22 standards in place now are inadequate to protect forest health and
23 water quality. Said rules should also take into account the
24 economic impact on timber harvesters who must follow them.
25 VFB also requests that the Senate Natural Resources Committee
26 take testimony from landowners, end users and timber harvesters
27 during the amendment process. (From Forestry Section)(2012)
28

29 **TOURIST INFORMATION**

37

30 Vermont Farm Bureau supports tourist information signage
31 policy that is fair to all businesses.
32

33 Vermont Farm Bureau should work closely with the Agency of
34 Agriculture, Food and Markets to develop signage for state
35 highways to direct the public to agricultural businesses and
36 destinations.
37

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports changes in Vermont’s sign
2 laws to:

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

10
11 Vermont Farm Bureau urges increased State support for
12 efforts to promote tourism and the sale of agricultural products.
13 (2011)

14
15 **TRANSPORTATION**

38

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

20
21 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a waiver from interstate
22 weight limits for trucks with agricultural or forestry products.
23 (2009)

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports authorizing properly-
26 configured trucks hauling agricultural or forestry materials to
27 operate at weights up to 97,000 pounds on any interstate
28 highway. We urge the Vermont Congressional Delegation to make
29 permanent the temporary waiver of lower weight limits granted to
30 Vermont for calendar 2010. (2010)

31
32 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes legislation that creates an
33 unreasonable hardship on an agritourism business or farm stand
34 that has to use an existing railroad crossing. (2008)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau supports that the state statutes
37 provide the right to access for all agricultural practices and the
38 right to public access to sell agricultural products (including, but

1 not limited to, dairy products, agronomic, maple syrup,
2 horticulture and forestry) across railroad crossings. (2009)

3
4 Vermont Farm Bureau supports all farming activities
5 involving a railroad crossing shall be grandfathered as of
6 1/1/2009. (2008)

7
8 Vermont Farm Bureau requests the railroads identify all farm
9 railroad crossings and report same to the Vermont Agency of
10 Transportation. (2008)

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the unrestricted right of
13 vehicles involved in natural resource industries to travel Vermont
14 roads and highways consistent with the public health and safety.
15 Specialized equipment used to apply materials to crops or to
16 harvest crops should be considered agricultural vehicles for the
17 purpose of registration and permits.

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a mechanism that enables
20 farmers and custom operators to purchase highway diesel fuel
21 tax-free at the point of purchase. (2006)

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports allowing tandem trailers on
24 interstate highways. We also support permitting trucks with
25 agricultural or forest product overweight permits authority to use
26 interstate highways, where feasible to substantially shorten trips.
27 (2006)

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that interstate highways
30 allow the same weight limits that are presently allowed on
31 secondary highways.

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports increased Vermont Highway
33 department focus on repair and maintenance of right of way fences
34 along the Interstate system bordering land where animals are
35 actively being pastured, not only for the safety of motorists, but
36 also to fulfill the promise made to landowners when the system
37 was built. (2013)

38

1 Vermont Farm Bureau supports legislation to provide
2 reciprocal agreements, regulations and laws for truck travel
3 between all New England states and New York State.
4

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

12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued improvement of
13 U.S. Route 2 as the primary east-west corridor through northern
14 New England.
15

16 Vermont Farm Bureau supports a sales tax exemption on
17 trucks registered as agricultural. (2007)
18

19 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the availability of natural gas
20 for cars and trucks.
21

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

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

32 Vermont Farm Bureau supports not including incidents
33 involving farm tractors on drivers' records when the
34 farmer/employee is not at fault. (2003)
35

36 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that when a farmer delivers
37 product processed on the farm for retail sale in his own truck, he

1 should not be required to meet CDL or hours of service
2 requirements. (2006)

3
4 **USDA**

39

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

9
10 **WATER QUALITY/STREAMS**

40

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

16
17 Vermont Farm Bureau supports an educational outreach
18 effort to encourage farmers to learn about and comment on the
19 proposed Vermont Confined Animal Feeding Operation rules.
20 (2012)

21
22 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes state or federal designation of
23 ground water as a public trust. (2006)

24
25 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the right of private property
26 owners to repair flood damage with prompt permission from NRCS
27 with no lengthy permit process and to remove gravel from streams
28 without yard limits in cooperation with the Army Corps of
29 Engineers.

30
31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports easing restrictions to allow
32 landowners to keep the water channels and stream banks clear so
33 that the 100-year flood stage does not turn from the 100-year
34 flood to a 30- or 15-year flood where bridges become dams,
35 causing homes to become isolated from emergency care and fire
36 protection. (2011)

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

8
9 Vermont Farm Bureau resolves that the 25 foot buffer
10 requirement be maintained and only required on waterways with
11 year-round running water. (2008)

12
13 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the protection of
14 groundwater under Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP's) with
15 oversight of water quality standards by the Agency of Agriculture,
16 Food and Markets under 6 V.S.A. Chapter 215, Section 4810(a).
17 Further, we urge that regulatory agencies understand the special
18 and distinct requirements for water quality standards as they
19 apply to agriculture when making rules and regulations. And that
20 all farm water quality-related issues be solely under the
21 jurisdiction of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. (2013)

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau urges Lake Champlain Basin
24 Committee to redirect funding from such efforts as implementing
25 a TMDL analysis and watershed planning. The committee should
26 focus on implementing solutions to known causes of phosphorous
27 runoff, including urban and suburban sources. (2001)

28
29 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the existing Ag Working
30 Group to guide officials in determining changes to the
31 implementation of federal water quality standards. (2013)

32
33 Vermont Farm Bureau supports continued funding for the
34 implementation of BMP's. VFB further supports having the
35 Vermont Agency of Agriculture make available matching funds to
36 all types of farming for non-point source water pollution control.
37 Funds should be available for any farm construction of pollution
38 control and containment equipment or structures. (2010)

1 Vermont Farm Bureau opposes any attempt to assess fees for
2 water withdrawal for recreational, commercial, municipal or
3 agricultural use. (2001)
4

5 **WETLANDS**

41

6 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly supports the Natural
7 Resource Conservation Service as the sole agency for agricultural
8 wetland issues and delineations. We support hay land being
9 included in the delineation of crops for the purpose of establishing
10 prior converted wetlands. We oppose the Natural Resource
11 Conservation Service being part of any other national agency than
12 the USDA.
13

14 Vermont Farm Bureau strongly objects to the heavy-handed
15 manner in which the existing rules and regulation regarding
16 wetlands are interpreted and enforced.
17

18 Vermont Farm Bureau calls for aggressive pursuit of existing
19 AFBF policies on wetlands.
20

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

31 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the conversion of
32 insignificant, Class 2 wetlands for agricultural purposes by the
33 granting of general use permits. (2001)
34

35 Vermont Farm Bureau believes that private property owners
36 be fairly compensated when restrictions are placed on private
37 wetlands. (2007)
38

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

11
12 **WILDLIFE**

42

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

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

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

31 Vermont Farm Bureau recommends that 10% of the moose
32 permits be issued to resident applicants of the management unit
33 in which the moose hunt is to be held. We support legislation that
34 would allow the legal taking of a moose, turkey, deer or bear
35 which is causing damage to crops, fences, agricultural structures
36 or other valuable property by the property owner or his designee
37 on their property and to increase the season length and number of
38 turkeys to be taken each year. (2013)

1 We urge that the American Farm Bureau Federation oppose
2 the authority of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enforce the
3 Endangered Species Act.

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

11
12 Vermont Farm Bureau supports regular application of
13 lampricide to Vermont streams or rivers feeding Lake Champlain.
14 (2011)

15
16 **WORLD TRADE**

43

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

- 20 1) Apply U.S. domestic standards for safety, quality and
21 labeling.
- 22 2) Levy duties to offset foreign subsidies.
- 23 3) Implement country of origin labeling.
- 24 4) Mandate use of ingredient contents in accounting for
25 import quotas for food products.
- 26 5) Apply an assessment on all imported dairy products for
27 dairy promotion equivalent to that paid on domestic
28 products.
- 29 6) Charge \$1.00 per head for beef promotion, including all
30 imported beef to be distributed in the U.S.

31
32 The United States should not allow imports of animal
33 products from nations harboring foot and mouth disease or from
34 countries that receive and transship such products. (2011)

35
36 Vermont Farm Bureau encourages the development and
37 support of federal and state programs that enhance the ability of
38 private and cooperative businesses to export farm products,

1 including value-added products such as dairy. New entrants into
2 the export market should be encouraged, rather than stifled, as
3 under current USDA rules. Specifically, USDA should revoke the
4 rule that requires previous export experience.

5
6 Vermont Farm Bureau supports the prohibition of any
7 imported milk protein concentrate, any blend of MPC and nonfat
8 milk powder or any blend of nonfat milk powder and any dairy
9 protein. Vermont Farm Bureau supports maintaining dairy quotas
10 presently in place and not allowing any further importation of
11 dairy products from any country. In the following year, import
12 quotas should be reduced to protect the prices of dairy. (2009)

13
14 The United States should not allow dairy products that
15 require U.S. Grade A sanitary standards to be imported from
16 nations lacking Grade A-inspection of their dairy farms, milk
17 transportation systems and dairy processing plants. (2005)

18
19 Vermont Farm Bureau backs the effort to classify milk protein
20 concentrates (MPC) as a dairy product and have tariffs and
21 promotion fees applied. (2003)

22
23 Vermont Farm Bureau supports agricultural reciprocity with
24 all nations, provided these nations have the same regulations on
25 health and safety of the food. (2010)