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Proposed State Policies to be Reaffirmed Yuma County Farm Bureau

Preservation of Farmland: (Page 3)

We support preservation of farmland, both as a means of preserving the character of our communities and of continued local production of food, fiber and ornamentals, but not against the will of, or at the expense of, the property owner.

We support the concept of transferable development rights as a means of preserving agricultural use of agricultural land, on condition of appropriate compensation to and voluntary agreement by the property owner.

Furthermore, we should investigate the possibility of transferring state or federal lands to the owner of agricultural land, for an in kind trade of development rights. The owner of agricultural land would then be able to sell or develop this land for monetary reimbursement of their agricultural ground development rights. (2006) reaffirm

Natural Resource Conservation Districts: (Page 6)

Candidates for Supervisor in a Natural Resource Conservation District shall be of legal voting age, an owner or partner in a farm or ranch operation within the boundaries of the district.

The criteria for approval of conservation projects funded through Natural Resource Conservation Districts should consider a balance of factors, not just environmental impacts. These factors include: conservation, economic, management, environmental and production impacts. Control of decision making concerning project funding, should remain at the local level to facilitate reasonable consideration of all projects, a project's priority, the resources affected and the benefits of a project.

We encourage Farm Bureau members to participate on Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) boards and we support full state funding for the NRCDs and NRCD Education Resource Centers. (2006) reaffirm

Flood Plain Designation: (Page 12)

Designation of a flood plain, floodway, conveyance channel, or the establishment of any maps or narratives affecting private property should immediately be deemed a "taking" of the affected property and full and adequate compensation should be paid for all such takings and for all other detriments caused by such designations. (2006) reaffirm

State Trust Lands: (Pages 17, 18)

Sale of state trust land should be done with full consideration for all economic impacts of the development, such as water supply, roads, schools and other infrastructure.

We recommend that Arizona continue using the current grazing fee schedule. Due to the increasing incidence of gates left open and cut fences, farmers and ranchers are often faced with serious disruption of their operation and increased expenses.

We recommend Arizona strictly enforce its current laws and regulations pertaining to state owned land, destruction of lease improvements, theft, licensing and permitting.

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We request that the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service inform other public land users and the public in general, of the law.

We recommend that there be equal representation of stakeholders on the Governor's State Land Committee. (2006) reaffirm

Fire Control: (Page 20)

We propose that in the interest of economy, and for the betterment of our public lands, that the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management suspend all fire fighting activities on the public lands except where human lives, homes, investment or commercial timber is at stake.

We support the use of controlled and prescribed burns as management tools where applicable. The agency should be able to use the wild fire funds if the burn goes out of control.

We support the use of grazing as a fire prevention tool on public lands. (2006) reaffirm

State Sovereignty Over Public Lands:

We believe the federal government should acknowledge that Arizona has had ownership of all non-private lands within the state's boundaries since statehood. Therefore, we support efforts to establish state sovereignty over public domain land including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. (2006) reaffirm

Wildlife Management: (Pages 22, 23, 24, 25)

We endorse and support those programs of wildlife harvest and population control including trapping which experience has proven beneficial to the maintenance of balanced range use by both domestic and wild animals.

We oppose the passage of any proposition pertaining to Wildlife management that would prohibit the taking of wildlife on public lands.

Excessive populations of wildlife owned by the people of Arizona are destructive to wildlife habitat, cultivated farmland, rangeland and domestic livestock.

Currently elk are causing severe damage to an increasing amount of the northern Arizona range resource while uncontrolled predator populations currently inflict heavy losses on both domestic livestock and game species.

We urge the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to stabilize and maintain elk populations at levels compatible with multiple use and sustained yield principles. The program should be acceptable to range resource managers including host federal agencies, the Arizona Land Department and private farmland and rangeland owners. Such action is necessary for resource management, land use equity and the reduction of depredation on private lands.

We strongly support private property rights, therefore when elk are on private land, the property owner has the right to take action to protect his or her property and interests.

Due to the economic impact of elk depredation on private lands or to private property on state or federal lands, we urge the adoption of legislation enabling aggrieved farmers and ranchers to recover reasonable reparations for damages and providing farmers and ranchers with a means of

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requiring the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to take preventative actions, remove offending animals and pay damages. Uncontrolled populations of predators, certain rodents and birds continue to inflict unnecessary losses on domestic livestock, game animals and agricultural crops. As Arizona is dominated by federal and state land ownership; we urge our elected state and federal representatives to provide state funds and increased federal funding to levels necessary to maintain an effective animal damage control program within the wildlife services budget under the USDA.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission shall exterminate any predator after the first incident where human safety is jeopardized and adhere to and enforce the state livestock killer law, ARS 17-302.

We favor resource-based management of wildlife. Farm and ranch land should be protected through accurate counting and corresponding harvest ratios that effectively manage wildlife. Depredation hunts should be implemented to maintain proper balance.

We specifically support the right of producers to protect their property from depredation by stock killing predators as administered by the Animal Services Division of the Department of Agriculture and protect private property, crops and pasture, without fear of reprisal, from the Game and Fish Department or any other law enforcement agency. The private landowner or the Game and Fish Department should immediately deal with any wildlife exhibiting aggressive behavior.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's management responsibilities should end when wildlife enters onto, and is destructive to, private property, crops and pasture, unless an agreement is reached for just compensation between private landowners and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

We urge the EPA to allow the use of appropriate predator control devices and toxicant on all lands. We support the continued supervised use of the M44 coyote getter, and continued use of the steel trap and leg hold traps as essential tools in predator control.

Wildlife and range managers shall be required to have a certain amount of hands-on experience on a working ranch or livestock operation.

We recommend that at least one position within the Arizona Game and Fish Commission should be filled by a person who represents Arizona's range and livestock industry and whose private lands and water support much of Arizona's wildlife populations.

We are opposed to any introduction of additional wolf or bear species in Arizona. Anyone importing wolves and bears should be financially responsible for the damage they cause. We believe that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not meet the population objectives and recommend that the Mexican Grey wolf reintroduction program be abandoned at the three-year anniversary and all released wolves and all of their pups be captured and removed.

In light of budget deficits, livestock depredation, and general unwise use of large sums of money, we urge immediate elimination of government funding of the Mexican Grey Wolf program.
(2006) reaffirm

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Small Ag Systems: (Page 40)

We support a water testing exemption for small agricultural operations of 25 persons or fewer. Farmers should be exempt from testing water every 10 days as required of municipalities. (2006) reaffirm

County Departments of Environmental Quality: (Page 46)

We oppose creation of any new bureaucratic agency to address environmental issues. We oppose any legislation creating county departments of environmental quality. (2006) reaffirm

Special Local Needs: (Page 51)

We support the concept of Special Local Needs (SLN) registration of pesticides and encourage the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation to make application to sponsor SLN registrations when warranted. (2006) reaffirm

Documentation of Injury: (Page 56)

Modern agricultural chemicals are necessary tools for growing agricultural products. We support reasonable regulations of pesticide use and application, based on peer reviewed sound science. Legitimate complaints of pesticide-induced health issues must be documented by medical tests. Also, all medical tests must be made by agencies and laboratories using nationally accepted testing criteria. (2006) reaffirm

Crop Protection: (Pages 56, 57)

We support legislation to require the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to use established data from other states in the registration of new more environmentally friendly crop protection chemicals.

We support a comprehensive benefit-risk assessment of pesticide uses prior to any cancellation actions. We further urge a periodic review of restricted chemicals not now in use for the purpose of possible reinstatement. Therefore, we oppose legislation or regulation based upon emotional, non-documented complaints. Documented medical tests should be required to substantiate legitimate complaints. (2006) Reaffirm

Soil Chemical Tolerance Levels and Clean-Up: (Page 57)

Standards for soil contamination shall be based on research supported by verifiable scientific data. Agriculturalists should not be held liable for practices and application of chemicals that were and are done in accordance with federal, state and local standards.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality should be required to utilize bio-remediation or composting for solutions on property with chemical contamination when these methods can be successful. (2006) Reaffirm

Agricultural Inspection Stations: (Pages 57, 58)

Due to Project Slim, the agriculture inspection stations were closed. Since that time, Arizona has experienced the incursion of these new pests: fire ants, woolly white flies, red scale, and the giant salvinia. These pests demonstrate the need to reopen the agricultural inspections stations using money from the State General Fund. This would protect our agriculture, urban landscapes, golf courses and tourism industry. The inspection stations should inspect all commercial and non-commercial traffic.

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We encourage the legislature to provide adequate funding so the quarantine effort can reduce the need for future chemical or eradication control measures in Arizona. We support the use of the state's General Fund, other state agencies and Homeland Security funds to finance the border stations. We support requesting California to help finance the border stations. We do not support a destination inspection program as our sole source of inspection. We encourage the Department of Agriculture to maintain their current preventative measures when an infestation of fire ants is discovered in Arizona.

We further encourage the consolidating of inspection stations and ports of entry, where volume permits, and the cross training of employees to do two jobs at the same time.

We support cross training between U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors and Arizona Department of Agriculture inspectors on Arizona rules and regulations as they apply to border crossings of agricultural commodities coming across the Arizona-Mexico border. Arizona should reserve the right to inspect all agricultural commodities crossing the Arizona-Mexico border.

We recommend the implementation of an agricultural notification/inspection program at all Arizona airports which receive commercial aircraft flights originating outside of Arizona.

We believe the role of the inspection stations should be expanded to provide public relations, community service and other helpful tourist and traveler information along with efficient car and truck inspection. (2006) reaffirm

Medfly Trapping: (Page 59)

We support the funding of medfly trapping and/or eradication using the state's General Fund. This pest would not only be devastating to Arizona agriculture, but also to Arizona's urban areas. (2006) reaffirm

Screwworm: (Page 59)

We urge continuation of the screwworm eradication program as needed. (2006) reaffirm

Control of Rights-of-Way:

We recommend that state, county and local municipalities shall control weeds on borrow pits, rights-of-way, fences and their vacant lands.

In the interest of traffic safety, special effort should be made to keep all intersections clear of weeds and other growth on the right-of-way. Additionally, rights-of-way adjacent to agricultural land should be mowed before seed formation and shall be kept free of noxious weeds.

Utility companies and railroads shall be required to effectuate control of weeds within their rights-of-way where requested by residents in cultivated areas.

In rangeland areas, when any entity applies pesticides on rights-of-way or easements, they shall notify adjacent landowners two weeks prior to application. (2006) reaffirm

Aflatoxin: (Page 62)

We support continued efforts to manage and reduce aflatoxin in all affected crops and to resolve conflicts between the buyers and sellers of said crops. (2006) reaffirm

Priority Lien: (Page 62)

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We support legislation that would provide ag producers a priority lien on crop, livestock, specialty crops and other ag products that are sold to brokers, processors, accumulators and end users to protect producers from losses due to non-payment or bankruptcy.

We support the ability of producers to repossess commodities before items are filed in bankruptcy if the commodity is identifiable. (2006) reaffirm

Personal Property Tax: (Page 64)

We support repeal of the personal property tax. In the event taxes are required, taxes should be prorated for those who move equipment from one state to another.

Until such time as this tax is repealed we support legislation that would exempt farm machinery and farm supplies from personal property taxes. (2006) reaffirm

Karnal Bunt: (Page 78)

Karnal bunt should be immediately deregulated and handled as a quality issue.

We encourage continuation of compensation discussions and should keep the minimum compensation level the same as 1996.

Compensation should be established for harvesters and transporters and consistent regulations need to be established for sanitizing equipment. (2006) Reaffirm

Property Lien Release: (Page 80)

Any entity filing a lien against real or personal property for recording of debt(s) will be required by law to file a lien release within ninety (90) days of satisfaction of the debt. A lien holder may be exempt for one year from filing the release if the debtor signs an exemption. (2006) reaffirm

AZMET Program: (Page 82)

We encourage the further development and implementation by the University of Arizona of the AZMET (Arizona Meteorological Network) weather reporting system for the purpose of providing current and historical weather data to farmers to assist them in farm management decisions. (2006) reaffirm

Native Plants: (Pages 83, 84)

We support the licensing and tagging of native plants as required by state law.

We oppose extending the licensing and tagging to native plants that have been propagated and grown as nursery stock. (2006) reaffirm

Natural Disasters: (Page 84)

When natural disasters occur that lead to declarations of disaster areas, the designation should not be limited to state or county lines. Some infrastructures or facilities damaged by these disasters may be located across jurisdictional boundaries. We believe it is unjust discrimination to deny aid in cases where a jurisdiction on one side of a boundary is declared a disaster area, and an adjoining jurisdiction is not declared, and the facility in question that serves the declared area is located in the undeclared jurisdiction.

We urge the Arizona Division of Emergency Management Policy to grant exceptions in this kind of situation. (2006) reaffirm

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Preservation of Marriage: (Page 87)

We oppose any initiatives/referendums/legislative movements that move to give married status or anything that is similar to that of a marriage, to any joining, union, or common agreement between any individuals that is not specifically a marriage of one man and one woman legally and lawfully married. (2006) reaffirm

Agriculture Education: (Page 101)

We support efforts to promote accurate scientific information on the positive effects of agriculture to be incorporated into all education curriculums. (2006) Reaffirm

Liaison with Agriculture Commodity Organizations: (Page 106)

The highly varied circumstances and problems encountered in American agriculture have necessitated formation of many commodity organizations to address specific needs. Therefore, when a commodity group or Farm Bureau promotes, supports or opposes a particular issue that affects a specific commodity group, there must be close liaison with the commodity group involved. We must always seek reconciliation of divergent viewpoints and a position of mutual support.

We will support a commodity activity program that qualifies the Arizona Farm Bureau to participate in the American Farm Bureau commodity advisory committees.

We support the participation of the Farm Bureau in a council, which promotes communication among all Arizona agricultural groups. We also support the participation of Farm Bureau in the Annual Ag Summit.

We urge the Arizona Farm Bureau to contact all commodity groups prior to a delegate session to determine commodity concerns, needs and legislative priorities. As a result of this action, the Arizona Farm Bureau delegates can act on commodity issues with more complete knowledge. We request similar information and courtesy be provided to the Arizona Farm Bureau by the commodity groups.

We urge the Arizona Farm Bureau to contact all commodity groups immediately after a delegate session and inform them of policy actions taken. (2006) Reaffirm

Automobile Insurance: (Page 109)

Due to the increased numbers of accidents caused by underinsured or noninsured drivers, the issue of mandated levels of liability insurance or no-fault insurance needs to be addressed to protect the members and to help alleviate rising insurance rates.

We support the law requiring proof of bodily injury (BI) and property damage (PD) insurance coverage before an automobile may be licensed to operate on the streets, roads and highways of Arizona. We encourage the strengthening of this law so that fewer uninsured drivers will be on the road. (2006) reaffirm

Annual Meeting: (Page 112)

We direct the Arizona Farm Bureau officers and staff to conduct the annual meeting in no more than two consecutive days. Policy development shall be conducted in one day. (2006) Reaffirm

Leadership Training: (Page 113)

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We, with other farm organizations, will continue a training program for farmers and agribusiness members. The purpose of this training is to prepare speakers and evaluators to appear at hearings, legislative meetings, TV shows and civic clubs to represent the farm side of the issues involving pesticides, water, taxation and so forth. This would involve public functions. (2006) Reaffirm

Trucking Regulation: (Page 114)

The Arizona Farm Bureau Federation should inform its members regarding the new state and federal trucking regulations as they pertain to agricultural trucking. (2006) reaffirm