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1. PHILOSOPHY OF FARM BUREAU

Illinois Farm Bureau recognizes freedom, the dignity and worth of the individual, equal opportunity, initiative and compensation for accomplishment, as basic concepts responsible for our country's progress and stature among the nations of the world. We reaffirm our belief that the strength of every civilized society is the family. We believe in the sanctity of private property and individual rights as provided by the U.S. Constitution, as the basis of American freedom and progress. The principles of our economic system derive from and are consistent with our religious values and goals. Through this system the American people have produced abundant goods and services for themselves and for people of other nations and have enjoyed widespread educational advantages and religious opportunities.

We believe in incentives, individual responsibility, initiative, freedom and the right to work without governmental dependence. If our organization and our country are to continue to be free and strong, we must act to determine our own destiny.

Each individual must assume active responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the principles upon which our government was founded and vigorously oppose all programs and policies which erode its foundation. We deplore irresponsible acts of defiance and lack of respect for laws enacted by our elected governmental representatives at all levels.

Illinois Farm Bureau philosophy must represent the thinking of a majority of its members so their organization can achieve maximum effectiveness and influence. The autonomy of the local unit must be maintained to preserve a strong grass roots organizational base.

Illinois Farm Bureau is an organization through which farm people can work together and cooperate with others to strengthen agriculture's role and influence as a vital part of a strong, prosperous economy in a free America.

We will assist members in understanding, influencing, and adapting to the changing realities in production agriculture, the rural economy, and rural family life.

Our national life is founded on spiritual faith and belief in God. We favor leaving "In God We Trust" on coins and currency and "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ACTIVATION AND STATUS OF RESOLUTIONS

Policies of the Illinois Agricultural Association are subject to review at any official meeting of the voting delegates.

Resolutions adopted at this annual meeting state the current position of the Illinois Agricultural Association.

The voting delegates authorize the renumbering, placing, and arranging of the resolutions adopted at this annual meeting with the appropriate subject matter for publication in the current resolutions booklet.

1
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3 **3. COMPETITION/MONOPOLIES**

4 The rapid consolidation of agricultural businesses that serve farmers is a growing concern.
5 Questions arise whether such mergers and acquisitions are good for production agriculture and
6 what sort of competitive position farmers will find themselves in as a result of such private sector
7 business decisions.

8 We will:

- 9 1. Seek information on the merger and acquisition of agricultural businesses and how such
10 mergers and acquisitions will help or hinder Farm Bureau members.
11 2. Oppose mergers, acquisitions, or leveraged buyouts that create a monopoly of production,
12 marketing, and transportation situations or reduce competition in acquiring, pricing, or
13 transporting agricultural commodities and products.
14 3. Work to see:
15 A. Improvements to existing laws and regulations to empower appropriate agencies to
16 conduct expanded anti-trust review and/or oversight.
17 B. Anti-trust laws or department operations provide increased protection to competitive
18 markets.
19 C. Limitations enforced on mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures by the major
20 competitors in agricultural markets dominated by relatively few firms.
21 4. Encourage American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) to provide necessary staff time to
22 work closely with Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA),
23 Department of Justice, and Federal Trade Commission to ensure that anti-trust laws are
24 effective and enforced to protect farmer interests.
25 5. Support efforts to give the Department of Justice broader regulatory authority to include
26 regulation of anti-competitive monopsonistic (many sellers, one buyer) business behavior
27 to protect agricultural farmers' as well as consumers.
28

29 We believe Congress and the U.S. Department of Justice should work together to closely monitor
30 the agribusiness sector with the objective that current anti-trust laws are applied and enforced to
31 the fullest extent in order to allow full and fair pricing competition to flourish.
32

33 We urge:

- 34 1. Vigorous enforcement of the anti-trust laws, with special emphasis on the establishment of
35 a program designed to continuously monitor the grain, livestock, and agricultural
36 production input industries.
37 2. The U.S. Department of Justice to monitor for a potential monopoly on a regional, rather
38 than a national basis.
39 3. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to be included in the decision-making
40 procedure with respect to proposed mergers and acquisitions.
41 4. The Illinois Attorney General's office to investigate agricultural monopolies in Illinois and
42 cooperate with other State Attorneys General in investigating regional monopolies.
43
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46

47 **4. FARM INCOME AND STRUCTURE**

48
49 The economic well-being of Illinois farmers will continue to be the NUMBER-ONE-PRIORITY
50 issue of the Illinois Agricultural Association. We encourage opportunities for all segments of
51 agriculture.
52

53 We will support:

- 54 1. Programs and legislation of an innovative nature which increase net farm income.
55

- 1 2. Programs and legislation which could include items such as agricultural recapitalization,
2 farm asset transfer plans, lowering input costs through technology, and beginning farmer
3 education and loan programs.
- 4 3. Provisions that will protect farmers' investments in prepaid agricultural inputs.
- 5 4. Studying the feasibility of protecting farmers as unsecured creditors for prepayments of
6 farm inputs.
- 7 5. Research and development of new marketing, finance, computer, farm business
8 management, and personal development programs as needed to improve member income
9 and efforts to increase members' use of those programs.
- 10 6. Monitoring and encouraging appropriate federal and state agencies, and to monitor the
11 retail-to-farm price spreads for all major agricultural commodities.
- 12 7. Efforts to ensure open markets to all independent farmers.
- 13 8. Efforts to link farmer-members with economic opportunities and cooperative ventures
14 presented by the rapid change in agriculture.
- 15 9. Acting as an information resource for farmers and producer groups as they seek to create
16 these opportunities and structures. In addition, we will initiate and develop contact with
17 corporations and organizations to explore how all parts of the agriculture and food system
18 might link directly with farmers in value-added alliances, and may act as a facilitator and/or
19 partner, in this process.
- 20 10. Monitoring trends affecting farmers and strive to place an increased emphasis on
21 educational programs for farmers on various opportunities available.

22
23 We recognize the competitive nature of farming and will not interfere with the freedom of
24 individual farmers to make economic decisions.
25
26
27

28 **5. AGRICULTURAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

29
30 We support:

- 31 1. Continuation of agricultural education programs with emphasis placed on the recruitment
32 and training of qualified agricultural instructors.
- 33 2. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus working closely with their local school districts to establish
34 and ensure the maintenance, improvement and continuation of agricultural education
35 programs and FFA. High school agricultural education and the FFA are vital programs for
36 development of the talent and leadership needed in farming and agricultural service
37 industries.
- 38 3. Vocational and technical programs including post high school training and retraining.
- 39 4. Retention of primary administrative responsibility for vocational programs at the state and
40 local levels.
- 41 5. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus to work with their school districts to implement an updated
42 agricultural education curriculum to meet the needs of today's agriculture. The curriculum
43 should include agricultural science courses or other classes that would meet the criteria
44 needed to receive credit for a college prep course.
- 45 6. The inclusion of agricultural projects in school science fairs.
- 46 7. Efforts to create renewed interest in the above points.
- 47 8. The restoration of state level funding for agricultural education programs.

48 49 50 51 **6. AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM**

52
53 We support an effort to enhance the image of agriculture and promote the positive activities of
54 farmers and agribusiness. This effort enables students and teachers in the classroom to
55

1 understand the importance and contribution of American agriculture to the U.S. economy and all
2 its citizens. We recommend that a higher priority be placed on increasing resources for Illinois
3 Agriculture in the Classroom programs. Instruction should be directed to all students of all grade
4 levels about environmental, nutritional, agronomic, and animal agriculture issues, and be
5 correlated with the Illinois Learning Standards as established by the Illinois State Board of
6 Education.

7
8 We encourage all county Farm Bureaus to participate in Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom and
9 in all agricultural education activities.

10 11 12 13 **7. COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

14
15 We will:

- 16 1. Support legislation requiring the state to provide a major part of the operating funds for the
17 Illinois Community College program.
- 18 2. Encourage special emphasis on vocational, technical and semi-technical training.
- 19 3. Continue to support the charging of tuition as partial support for community colleges.
- 20 4. Support legislation providing for area-wide representation for Community College Boards.
- 21 5. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to surface and support candidates from rural areas for
22 Community College Boards.
- 23 6. Support efforts to revise current associate agricultural degree programs to make the
24 agriculture curriculum more contemporary.

25 26 27 28 **8. EDUCATION**

29
30 To ensure quality education for all Illinois children, we endorse the principles of accountability,
31 adequacy, and equity and will actively work to include these principles in any commission, task
32 force, or legislative proposal.

33
34 ACCOUNTABILITY is the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars to provide a comprehensive education
35 to achieve goals with measurable outcomes.

36
37 It includes the size and structure of school districts, the operation/administration of school districts
38 and performance of school districts in achieving desirable educational outcomes.

39
40 We will:

- 41 1. Seek significant long-term solutions to the problems of financing a quality education for all
42 students through political, legislative, or judicial means.
- 43 2. Encourage meaningful state incentives to support voluntary school consolidations.
- 44 3. Encourage teacher/staff professional development to improve teaching quality and to
45 address challenges associated with the School Recognition Process.
- 46 4. Seek legislation to remove tenure and develop a merit program.
- 47 5. Support the goal of preserving and strengthening local control of schools.
- 48 6. Support school district reorganization when determined locally by each district and if
49 approved by front door referendum. The requirements of a reorganization vote should
50 consist of the following:
 - 51 A. Either each board of education initiate the reorganization vote or petitions
52 requesting the reorganization vote from 30 percent of the registered voters in each
53 district be required for a referendum.

- 1 B. A majority of those voting on the reorganization be required for passage in either a
2 unit or dual district.
3 C. Referendum consideration should be restricted to general elections only.
4 D. Taxpayers in the proposed consolidation area should be given the property tax
5 implications of the proposed consolidation in advance of the referendum vote.
6 7. Support efforts to allow school district annexation proceedings to occur through approval
7 of the Regional Board of Trustees provided public notice and hearing requirements are
8 met.
9 8. Support the formation of co-operative high schools when such co-operatives would
10 broaden and enhance academic opportunities and will result in economic efficiencies.
11 9. Support innovative pilot efforts that include creative partnerships with business and
12 industry, higher education and government; encourage exploration of new ideas and new
13 approaches to make schools more effective and efficient. Ideas and approaches should
14 include, but not be limited to, Charter Schools, Distance Learning, and new approaches to
15 Vocational Education and Special Education.
16 10. Support policies allowing local initiatives to increase academic time such as restructuring
17 the school day, calendar and schedule.
18 11. Support legislation that would allow local school districts the authority to decide whether to
19 observe legal holidays as a day of non-attendance for students.
20 12. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to establish programs which assist members in
21 understanding and participating in their schools. Such programs may include meetings
22 with school boards and school administration to establish open communications about
23 district operations, curriculum development, budgeting and finance.
24 13. Support full funding of state and federal education mandates by the entity proposing the
25 mandate and a full review of those mandates every three years.
26 14. Seek legislation limiting the requirement for schools to fund special education to the
27 education component only. The State of Illinois should be required to provide student
28 housing and medical care within state or federal agencies.
29 15. Support legislation requiring a hearing by local school boards before levying a tax for Life
30 Safety and Energy Conservation bonds if such bond issues exceed \$100,000.
31 16. Evaluate the legislation and rules concerning the waiver of mandates requested by local
32 school districts. The legislature needs to evaluate each request on its own merit.
33

34 ADEQUACY is financing education at a level sufficient to fund a comprehensive educational
35 program.
36

37 We will:

- 38 1. Support the concept of using a foundation level of funding as determined in the Education
39 Funding Advisory Board 2002 report. This level should be recalculated annually and be
40 based on the desired level of outcome.
41 2. Support the use of prior year Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) to provide accurate
42 information for school budgeting and fiscal management.
43 3. Support retention of categorical grants that address special needs and allow all schools to
44 benefit. Revenue from other categorical grants, which are competitive, should be included
45 in the general state aid formula.
46 4. Support a State funded capital program to assist school districts in modernizing existing
47 facilities. This program should include funding for the Americans With Disabilities Act.
48

49 EQUITY is fairness in educational opportunities for students and fairness in the way education is
50 funded.
51

52 We will:

- 53 1. Support the concept of leveling up (defined as reducing overall variation by increasing the
54 expenditure/revenue per student at the lower end of the distribution).
55

- 1 2. Support meaningful property tax reform through increases in state revenue which may
2 include revenue growth. Increases may be in addition to those needed to permit the state
3 to provide a majority of the funds for the foundation level of per pupil spending.
- 4 3. Support an increase in the state income tax to permit the state to provide a majority of the
5 funding for the foundation level of per pupil spending. It is recognized that when
6 considering any such increase, it may be necessary to improve the fairness of the flat rate
7 individual income tax by going to a graduated personal exemption.
- 8 4. Support a local individual income tax for education, by front door referendum. The local
9 income tax rate should be a fixed flat rate for all school districts. The revenues from such
10 a tax could be used as local tax effort, to replace property tax revenues, to enrich
11 educational opportunities above the foundation level or some combination thereof.
- 12 5. Support requiring an equitable local tax effort in every school district as an important part
13 of achieving fairness in educational opportunities for students and fairness in the way
14 education is funded.
- 15 6. Support increased State investment in technology to increase productivity, enhance
16 student achievement, expand learning time and staff development.
- 17 7. Support efforts to improve and expand the curriculum and delivery of services in small and
18 rural schools through development of a statewide two-way telecommunication system or
19 other means of communication technology.
- 20 8. Support and encourage cooperation between school districts through inter-governmental
21 agreements.
- 22 9. Work with the State Board of Education to simplify grant application requirements. If the
23 State Board of Education fails to simplify the grant application process, then we will support
24 legislation making the changes.

25
26 We support the general concepts of the Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) of the Illinois
27 General Assembly relating to property tax relief, adequate funding for schools, and school
28 reorganization.

31 32 **9. HIGHER EDUCATION**

33
34 We will monitor state law and regulations relating to the eligibility for publicly financed college
35 scholarships, loans and grants so farm youth have equal opportunity to receive such scholarships,
36 loans or grants.

37
38 We will support:

- 39 1. Retention and enhancement of agricultural curriculum and research at institutions of
40 higher learning.
- 41 2. A coordinated long-range plan developed by the state institutions of higher learning to
42 maintain quality agricultural education and research facilities.
- 43 3. Continued efforts to recover principal and interest from persons who have defaulted on
44 their government-backed guaranteed student loans.
- 45 4. Student loan programs.
- 46 5. Co-Curricular agricultural organizations which allow hands-on experience for students to
47 further develop their leadership skills. Organizations such as these help to foster our next
48 generation of agriculture leaders.
- 49 6. A balance between professors' classroom instruction and research time at colleges and
50 universities.
- 51 7. Legislation to require state supported higher education institutions to implement
52 standardized curricula, including credit hours awarded and requirement fulfilled for the
53 course, to make it easier for students to transfer between all levels of college institutions.
54 The implemented system would utilize a standard course prefix and numbering system.

- 1 8. The continuation of the University of Illinois "South Farms." Further university expansion
2 and community development should not sacrifice the advantages which the "South Farms"
3 currently provide for the teaching and research needs of agriculture.
- 4 9. The continuation and funding of the existing University of Illinois outlying research centers
5 including but not limited to Dixon Springs Research Center. Before any recommendations
6 of the University of Illinois' Provost's (Revitalization of the College of ACES System of
7 Field Research and Education Centers for the 21st Century) Task Force are implemented
8 we will encourage the Task Force to seek input from local stakeholders at and near all
9 outlying research centers.
- 10 10. The study of funding quality and cooperation of agricultural programs at institutions of
11 higher education.

12
13 We will support legislative efforts to change the selection process for all state of Illinois funded
14 public university Boards of Trustees in order to make the board more accountable to the voters
15 and taxpayers of the state. We will also seek changes in how these Boards of Trustees conduct
16 their meetings in order to ensure items cannot be added to the agenda and voted on without
17 public debate and input.

18
19 We will oppose efforts of the Illinois Board of Higher Education to mandate additional course
20 requirements for entrance to Illinois public universities.

21
22 We oppose the selling and privatization of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission's
23 secondary market student loan portfolio.

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27 **10. UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION**

28

29 A viable University of Illinois Extension will help individuals, families, farms, businesses, and
30 communities adapt to change in an increasingly technical world. The University of Illinois
31 Extension and the Land Grant University system must maintain the expertise needed to train
32 competent people for programs in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer
33 science, 4-H and youth development, and community and economic development. To meet
34 these goals, the University of Illinois Extension should:

- 35 1. Be a conduit for information exchange between the research community, farmers, and the
36 citizens of Illinois.
- 37 2. Increase clientele access to and understanding of multi-media data information systems.
- 38 3. Employ proficient, professional people. Some of this staff may be part time.
- 39 4. Assess the needs of their clientele and focus their efforts on these needs.
- 40 5. Maintain fair and equal access to the University of Illinois Extension resources,
41 information, and programs.
- 42 6. Give counties more flexibility in the hiring practices of educators. The university should
43 develop options where units may join together to hire specialist(s) to help more farmers
44 and individuals at the county level.
- 45 7. Educate the general public that the University of Illinois Extension is a part of the U.S.
46 Department of Agriculture.
- 47 8. Educate the general public about production agriculture's primary contribution to the food,
48 fiber, nursery and greenhouse growing industries and other U.S. food sources.

49

50 We support continued public funding of the University of Illinois Extension and urge county Farm
51 Bureaus to participate in the development of the University of Illinois Extension as an efficient
52 educational organization in their county.

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1 We will work with the State Fair 4-H Advisory Committee to maintain the conference judging
2 format in order to ensure maximum 4-H member participation and encourage public display of
3 these projects.
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7 **11. ENERGY**

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9 We will support:

- 10 1. Development of a national energy policy to define the energy needs of the nation and how
11 these needs can best be met consistent with the use of natural resources, protection of
12 the environment, sound land use, and the welfare of the people. In addition, this policy
13 should continue to reduce dependency on foreign energy sources.
- 14 2. Independent studies that would compare the different energy programs for our nation's
15 needs (such as the conversion of wind energy to ammonia) and see how these will impact
16 the agricultural community.
- 17 3. Encouraging the American Farm Bureau Federation to work aggressively with legislators
18 to enable more U.S. oil and gas production by opening known oil and gas reserves in the
19 Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR), off shore and in the U.S. mainland, explore for
20 additional oil and gas sites, and build new oil and gas refineries.
- 21 4. Aggressive promotion of programs encouraging the increased use of Illinois coal as an
22 important component of a national energy policy and source of rural economic
23 development.
- 24 5. Energy conservation and development of information programs to encourage
25 conservation of all fuels by all sectors of our economy. We encourage universities and
26 others to institute and conduct appropriate research and education programs designed to
27 inform the public on energy conservation including the design and promotion of more
28 energy efficient equipment.
- 29 6. Research, education, and incentives to further the development of methane and
30 renewable sources such as wind, biomass energy, and methane digester systems.
- 31 7. The establishment of Renewable Energy Standards to encourage the development of
32 more renewable sources for energy production.
- 33 8. The market system as the best long-term means of allocating scarce energy resources
34 and encouraging development of adequate energy supplies.
- 35 9. Further research of coal gasification technology.
- 36 10. The development and upgrade of connections between electric production and
37 transmission infrastructure that could provide energy customers direct access to lower
38 cost energy supplies.

39
40 We oppose declaring any potential biomass crop ineligible for use in any biomass energy
41 incentive program simply because it is non-native.
42

43 We endorse the basic goals and objectives of the 25x'25 Alliance in promoting renewable energy.
44

45 We will monitor the development of wholesale power wheeling (the transfer of available electric
46 power from one area to another) and retail power wheeling (the transfer of electric power in a
47 competitive market directly to the end user) to ensure those systems are in the best interest of
48 rural and farm residents.
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12. NUCLEAR ENERGY

We will:

1. Continue to support the use of existing nuclear power generators as a source of needed energy along with adequate safeguards to ensure its safe and environmentally sound use.
2. Support the construction of a new generation of nuclear power facilities and work to repeal the state of Illinois' moratorium on construction of new nuclear facilities.
3. Seek to develop and support programs to provide farmers with adequate protection for themselves, their crops and their livestock from radiation contamination from nuclear plants or nuclear materials.
4. Support efforts to insure that utilities operating nuclear reactors maintain the appropriate legal and financial responsibility for damage to property, livestock and personal health caused by the operation or malfunctioning of such reactors.
5. Support federal research on the safe development and use of small and efficient reactors to assure the long-term supply of electricity.
6. Urge the proper agencies of the federal government to address immediately the problem of permanent storage or re-use of radioactive waste.

19 We oppose the siting of nuclear waste facilities near known aquifers where pollution could occur.

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21 Siting of the Illinois-Kentucky low level radioactive waste disposal facility should be determined by
22 the best technical data available and, if feasible, be located on property presently owned by the
23 state.
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13. RENEWABLE FUELS

29 We support:

- 30 1. State and federal tax credits and other programs that provide incentives for the use of bio-
31 based fuel additives, renewable fuels, cellulosic fuels, and the renewal of these tax credits.
- 32 2. State and national research initiatives to fund studies to reduce the production costs,
33 improve conversion technology, and broaden the sources of domestic renewable fuel
34 production including cellulosic and/or biomass.
- 35 3. A minimum goal that by 2012, ethanol represent 20 percent of all gasoline consumed in
36 Illinois annually.
- 37 4. Programs and efforts to increase renewable fuel production in Illinois.
- 38 5. Investment in and development of the appropriate infrastructure to support the expanded
39 use of renewable fuels.
- 40 6. The use of fuel which contains at least 85 percent ethanol in motor vehicles to meet the
41 alternative fuel requirements for public and private fleets in areas designated by the
42 Energy Policy Act and Clean Air Act.
- 43 7. The use of biodiesel to meet up to 100 percent of an affected utility or government fleet
44 emission reduction requirements under the Energy Policy Act of 1992.
- 45 8. The continuation of a renewable fuels use requirement on all state owned and/or leased
46 vehicles when and where available.
- 47 9. The classification of ethanol diesel blends as alternative/renewable fuels under the Clean
48 Air Act and the Energy Policy Act.
- 49 10. Biodiesel being included in all the U.S. Department of Energy's policies and materials
50 regarding alternative and renewable fuels.
- 51 11. The cost of purchasing biodiesel as an allowable expense in the Congestion Mitigation Air
52 Quality (CMAQ) program.
- 53 12. Federal research for better performing engines that run on E85 fuels.
54
55

- 1 13. Research and demonstration programs that use ethanol as a fuel for fuel cell engine
2 development.
- 3 14. Research on new uses and markets for co-products of renewable fuels production and
4 investigation of synergistic relationships in renewable fuels production systems and other
5 potential markets.
- 6 15. Continued research into ruminant and non-ruminant feed utilization of renewable fuels
7 Distiller's Dried Grains with solubles (DDGs) co-products and farmer education on
8 appropriate use of DDGs in livestock diets.
- 9 16. Quality control standards at renewable fuel plants that result in uniform, high quality co-
10 products from renewable fuels.
- 11 17. The continued use of Commodity Credit Corporation funds as an incentive payment to
12 producers of renewable fuels for new gallons of production.
- 13 18. The creation of a national renewable fuels refueling network with the interstate system as
14 our first priority.
- 15 19. The use of aboveground fuel storage for the retail sale of renewable fuels.
- 16 20. By voluntary methods or by regulation the reporting and publishing of renewable fuels
17 production and renewable fuels plant construction on a timely basis by an entity such as
18 the United States Department of Energy (USDOE).
- 19 21. Testing of ethanol at terminals to ensure uniform quality.
- 20 22. Nationwide adoption and implementation of American Society of Testing and Materials
21 (ASTM) standards for all renewable fuels.
- 22 23. Requiring retailers to display the percentage blend of biodiesel blend and its content upon
23 development of accepted standards and accurate tests to measure those blends.
- 24 24. Efforts to educate consumers and industry on the benefits of biofuel blends higher than ten
25 percent.
- 26 25. Federal renewable fuels tax incentives to promote the use of domestically-grown
27 commodities for domestically-produced renewable fuels.
- 28 26. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and other agricultural and allied
29 organizations and industries in aggressive public information campaigns which support
30 renewable fuels and challenge any misinformation.
- 31 27. Programs to encourage:
 - 32 A. Farmers, affiliated companies, and other agricultural businesses to use renewable
33 fuels as a way of promoting and using their own products.
 - 34 B. School districts, township governments, county governments, and municipalities to
35 use renewable fuels.
 - 36 C. Manufacturers to develop engines, including air cooled outdoor power equipment,
37 that would use a higher percentage of renewable fuels.
- 38 28. The use and expansion of renewable fuels as an octane or cetane enhancer, fuel source,
39 or lubricity agent to improve air quality. Our goal is expanding the use of all renewable
40 fuels to the maximum level possible.
- 41 29. County Farm Bureaus working with commodity groups to support the promotion and
42 education of what a flex fuel vehicle is to the automotive sales industry.

43
44 We will seek:

- 45 1. Legislation to require that all new gasoline-powered vehicles be flex-fuel.
- 46 2. Legislation that increases the ethanol blending standard to a level higher than 10 percent.
47 Such legislation should allow for a transitional period that would allot an appropriate
48 amount of time for new vehicles to be operable under the higher blending standards and
49 current vehicles to be conditioned to do the same.
- 50 3. Legislation requiring oil companies to provide a base gasoline that would accommodate
51 year-round blending of ethanol.
- 52 4. An industry standard that would require all vehicles capable of burning E85 fuel to be
53 equipped with a yellow gas cap to distinguish this capability.
- 54 5. Implementation of a statewide, year-round 3.5 percent oxygen requirement for gasoline.

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1 We will oppose the use of federal renewable fuels tax incentives for imported renewable fuels or
2 renewable fuels produced with imported agricultural commodities.
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6 **14. UTILITIES** 7

8 We will:

- 9 1. Continue to work for quality rural telephone and electric service with just and reasonable
10 rates.
- 11 2. Develop a higher visibility and formal involvement in electric rate issues by:
12 A. Cooperating with other intervenors in major rate cases involving farmers.
13 B. Interacting with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) and utilities seeking to
14 modify rate designs to favor agricultural users of electricity.
15 C. Monitoring utilities and the ICC to insure that "cost of service" rate designs and
16 regulations are not put in place which would economically harm agriculture.
- 17 3. Build a coalition of groups and organizations with identifiable common interests regarding
18 electric rate issues.
- 19 4. Strengthen the working relationship with the rural electric cooperative system.
- 20 5. Work to simplify and streamline the regulation of the utility business while maintaining the
21 goal of prompt, effective, and efficient regulation.
- 22 6. Encourage the Illinois Department of Agriculture to assume the role of arbitrator in certain
23 utility cases involving farmland. Where requested, we will recommend language for
24 inclusion in landowners' right-of-way agreements that would appoint the Illinois
25 Department of Agriculture (Bureau of Farmland Protection) as arbitrator in certain cases
26 where disputes arise. Upon request, we will hold meetings with landowners before and
27 after completion of the project to address questions and concerns of landowners.
- 28 7. Work with AFBF to seek federal legislation requiring all federally permitted utility projects
29 to have minimum construction standards in place before granting permits to utility
30 companies wishing to construct on farmland.
- 31 8. Encourage the electric suppliers in Illinois to be active in the development and
32 management of wind generation.
- 33 9. Work with electric and gas suppliers in Illinois to evaluate potential load requirements for
34 agricultural operations and develop a long range plan to upgrade existing infrastructure to
35 handle future demand loads.

36
37 We support:

- 38 1. The appointment of the ICC. We encourage the appointment of at least one
39 commissioner who is knowledgeable of agriculture.
- 40 2. Legislation requiring all future underground pipelines to be buried at least 60 inches.
- 41 3. Aggressive action by the ICC to adjust all Illinois utility companies' summer rate time
42 period cut-off dates in order to achieve a statewide September 15 summer ending date.
- 43 4. Legislation that would provide for some form of constitutional taxation of underground
44 pipelines by the state of Illinois and payment in lieu of taxes to benefit local units of
45 government where pipelines are located.
- 46 5. Regulatory oversight of anhydrous ammonia pipelines by the Surface Transportation
47 Board due to the monopolistic nature of the industry.
- 48 6. Legislation that would create a surcharge or a fee-based "Pipeline Fund" to address
49 potential environmental problems caused by abandoned pipelines.
- 50 7. Legislation requiring pipeline companies to remove abandoned or obsolete pipelines from
51 the ground and to ensure that the affected areas be returned to the original productivity.
- 52 8. Efforts to assess telecommunication needs in rural areas and ensure that
53 telecommunication providers in partnership with rural communities meet those identified
54 needs.
55

1 9. Legislation requiring utility companies to remove municipal taxes from bills of rural
2 residences.
3

4 We will seek:

- 5 1. To develop a positive approach, including legislation, to protect farmland, farm owners,
6 and operators from losses caused by utility installations. Such utilities should be
7 constructed in a manner to cause the least possible interference with agriculture.
- 8 2. To require that upon notice to a utility company that owns or controls underground utilities,
9 including fiber optic equipment and lines, by an individual or entity who is planning on
10 excavating under or over such lines, the utility company shall excavate a minimum area to
11 expose such line. This minimum area excavated by the utility company shall be large
12 enough to allow the individual or entity planning on excavating to conduct their needed
13 work in a way as not to damage the line.
- 14 3. Legislation or regulations requiring all utility and/or pipeline projects that are
15 constructed/buried across agricultural land complete an Agricultural Impact Mitigation
16 Agreement with the Illinois Department of Agriculture before landowners are contacted
17 about the project.
- 18 4. Legislation that would obligate the ICC to require a finding from the Illinois Department of
19 Agriculture that minimum construction standards are required for any proposed utility
20 projects before companies are granted permits to construct improvements. Such
21 construction standards should provide that farmland and drainage systems be adequately
22 protected or repaired by utility companies. As a part of those standards, utility companies
23 should be required to use a pilot trench where the landowner or tenant indicates a farm tile
24 might be compromised during installation of an underground utility line.
- 25 5. Further study on proper means to compensate farm owners affected by utility installations.
26 This should include legislation to require certain minimum standards for compensation
27 agreements or annual payments for certain structures. Compensation should include cost
28 of repairs to damaged infrastructure and crop losses as a result of damaged infrastructure.
- 29 6. Legislation requiring all utilities, proposing acquisition of rights-of-way for utility projects, to
30 send written notice of intention to acquire such right-of-way to landowners and lessees at
31 least 90 days prior to any personal contact with the landowners and lessees for purposes
32 of negotiating such right-of-way acquisition.
33

34 We oppose the practice of the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) literature being inserted in vehicle
35 license renewal notices.
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39 15. WIND ENERGY

40
41 We will support:

- 42 1. Wind energy generation as a component of the energy portfolio of the U.S.
- 43 2. Development of minimum statewide standards for industrial-scale wind energy facilities
44 including but not limited to property setbacks and other siting issues and performance
45 bonds.
- 46 3. Efforts to establish a fund, funded by wind energy producers, to ensure the availability of
47 money sufficient for decommissioning (meaning deconstruction) of abandoned wind
48 turbine installations.
- 49 4. Continuation of the current property tax assessment method and rate for commercial wind
50 turbines in Illinois.
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16. ABOVEGROUND FUEL STORAGE TANKS

We will support revisions to rules regarding aboveground fuel storage tanks to allow each farm to have enough aboveground fuel storage to receive a transport load of each specific fuel.

17. AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

We should assist in building farmer awareness about the potential sources of contamination on their farms and about minimizing the risks of using potentially hazardous substances.

We will seek legislation to preempt anticipatory nuisance claims against owners of proposed livestock facilities or expansions to existing facilities, provided that such facilities are in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and the construction or expansion of the facility has been approved by the Illinois Department of Agriculture under the Livestock Management Facilities Act.

We will encourage:

- 1. Legislation, regulations, and programs dealing with agricultural practices that recognize economic benefits and the ability to manage risks involved with production agriculture.
- 2. Working with other interested agencies and organizations to assure pollution standards and tolerances are scientifically formulated and economically feasible.
- 3. Farmers to participate in voluntary, third-party environmental assessments as a means to demonstrate compliance prior to an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) inspection as a means to meet IEPA requirements.
- 4. The continued use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) by farmers in all phases of their farming operation and ask that the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Illinois Department of Agriculture develop voluntary, incentive-based programs to assist farmers in implementing BMPs to improve water quality.
- 5. Policies made regarding the Gulf of Mexico hypoxia area to be backed by reliable, broad-based, scientific research. We should unite with other agricultural groups to form a coalition on the issue to:
 - A. Coordinate a plan of action.
 - B. Communicate with each other, the general public, elected officials, and members regarding the hypoxia area.
 - C. Evaluate current research data and encourage further research on the hypoxia area and issues related to it.
 - D. Use all means at our disposal to address the issue in a way that gives proper consideration to the impacts it has on agricultural production.

We support:

- 1. A farmer's right to build livestock buildings and other agricultural structures without the threat of litigation as long as they abide by current regulations and guidelines at the time of site approval.
- 2. Efforts to provide adequate funds to state and federal agencies for the purpose of aiding in the construction of agricultural pollution control devices and implementation of other agricultural practices to meet mandated standards.
- 3. Working closely with EPA to develop communication strategies to livestock farmers that are not intimidating, do not involve media or press releases, and develop reasonable timelines to address enforcement issues.
- 4. Modification of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) to exclude farms from the provisions of the Act. Reporting and notification requirements in SARA are too stringent and inappropriate for farming operations.

- 1 5. Efforts to exempt farmers and others who have legally disposed of materials from liability
- 2 provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Regulatory Cleanup and Liability Act
- 3 (CERCLA).
- 4 6. Research and information examining the effects of crop protection and animal health
- 5 products on the food chain and the environment.
- 6 7. The development of an overall rating system to measure the acute and chronic effects of
- 7 oral and dermal exposure to crop protection and animal health products.
- 8 8. Legislation to exempt property owners from financial responsibility for pollution that
- 9 resulted from previously-accepted farming practices.
- 10 9. The removal of setbacks on chemical application in conjunction with tile inlet structures
- 11 unless proven necessary by scientific data.
- 12 10. Changes in the Worker Protection Standards so posting of field entrances does not unduly
- 13 alarm consumers about the use of certain crop protection products.
- 14 11. Legislation which will require a verified name and address from the complainants on all
- 15 pollution complaint reports.
- 16 12. Increased government funding to ensure that landowners are adequately compensated
- 17 whenever farmland is used for purposes intended to achieve the government's natural
- 18 resource goals.
- 19 13. Increased dollars for educational, promotional, incentive-based, and technical assistance
- 20 programs and developing the guidelines for the implementation of programs at the local
- 21 level. We also support developing a separate source of funding either under conventional
- 22 agricultural conservation programs or rural development for the establishment of buffers.
- 23 14. Legislation indemnifying farmers and farmowners for the cost of clean-up and other
- 24 damages arising from the pollution of their land by the willful or negligent acts of others.
- 25 15. Congress setting specific guidelines and restraints on federal agencies charged with
- 26 implementing and enforcing federal law. We believe that Congress should provide for
- 27 strong congressional oversight of regulatory and significant agency actions as well as a
- 28 willingness to override unacceptable agency actions. Further, we support more vigorous
- 29 congressional scrutiny of agencies to prohibit regulatory agencies from administering laws,
- 30 to deter adoption of agency rules and actions that circumvent statutory intent. Specific
- 31 efforts should be made to oversee and to reform the inspection and rule-making authority
- 32 of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

33
34 We oppose:

- 35 1. Using mandatory methods to address agricultural, non-point source issues related to Total
- 36 Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of pollutants in streams.
- 37 2. Efforts to regulate or legislate any restrictions or moratoriums on a farmer's ability to
- 38 manage his or her farming operation in a manner consistent with BMPs. Existing
- 39 operations should not be restricted from expansion nor have undue limits placed upon
- 40 them due to the encroachment of others.
- 41 3. Regulations for septic systems that are not science-based and do not take into
- 42 consideration the economic impacts on the homeowner and on the local government.

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46 **18. ALTERNATIVES TO LANDFILLS**

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48 The problems of solid waste disposal have reached the point where continued use of landfills as

49 the only method of waste disposal is unacceptable. Development and utilization of waste

50 disposal techniques to serve as alternatives to landfills must be pursued with a high degree of

51 urgency.

- 1 We support the following order of preference for waste disposal:
- 2 1. Volume reduction at the source. Every effort should be made to avoid generating waste
 - 3 products, where feasible.
 - 4 2. Volume reduction by encouraging manufacturers to develop cost-effective uses for
 - 5 recyclable products. We will work towards the development of incentives to create
 - 6 additional markets and uses for these recycled products.
 - 7 3. Source separation which includes:
 - 8 A. Incentives for the return of all glass, plastic, or metal beverage containers. We will
 - 9 aggressively renew legislative efforts for passage of a beverage container deposit
 - 10 law.
 - 11 B. Aggressive, local recycling programs. We will seek, and urge the county Farm
 - 12 Bureaus to seek, the cooperation of appropriate government agencies to develop
 - 13 recycling programs and the information needed to secure the cooperation of the
 - 14 public.
 - 15 C. Composting. We support research on the effects of using yard waste on
 - 16 agricultural land.
 - 17 4. Where it can be shown to be economically feasible and environmentally safe, incineration
 - 18 of solid waste before disposing in a landfill. Units of government and private industry
 - 19 should work together to explore the economics and safety of incineration.
 - 20 5. Landfilling as a last resort. The state should require as a prerequisite for landfilling:
 - 21 A. Promotion and use of degradable products made from agricultural commodities or
 - 22 any practical product.
 - 23 B. Acceptance of bagged waste only if the bags are starch based biodegradable.
 - 24 C. That containers be degradable or recyclable.
 - 25 D. Continued research on the proper disposal, recycling, incineration or reprocessing
 - 26 of solid and hazardous waste.
 - 27

28 We encourage:

- 29 1. Manufacturers to research and develop returnable, recyclable, and degradable containers.
- 30 2. Retailers and consumers to use returnable, recyclable, and degradable containers.
- 31 3. Research on the effects of energy recovery from incineration.
- 32 4. Research on voluntary recycling options for agricultural plastics such as silage bags, bale
- 33 wraps, and bunker silo covers.
- 34 5. Research into laser gasification for mining of landfills and disposal of garbage.
- 35

36 We will support:

- 37 1. "Landfarming" of contaminated soils to preserve limited space available in landfills.
- 38 2. Changes to the laws and policies that increase the number of times an individual can
- 39 participate in a tire clean-up event and to allow non-governmental organizations to
- 40 sponsor a used tire collection program.
- 41
- 42
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44 19. ATMOSPHERIC QUALITY

45

46 We support government policies that:

- 47 1. Keep agriculture viable and address the costs and benefits of those programs using
- 48 sound, economic analysis.
- 49 2. Seek out alternative energy sources which will minimize atmospheric pollution.
- 50 3. Provide incentives to industries seeking to become more energy efficient or to reduce
- 51 emissions of identifiable atmospheric pollutants.
- 52 4. Seek cooperation of organizations and governments, foreign and domestic, to develop
- 53 better understanding and research on the implications of atmospheric pollution and the
- 54 means of preventing it.
- 55

- 1 5. Provide incentives to individuals seeking to reforest fragile lands that are currently in
2 agricultural production.
3

4 We support:

- 5 1. The development of engines that utilize affordable technology to reduce pollution.
6 2. Legislation that requires the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to use sound
7 science methods when identifying violations for atmospheric pollution.
8 3. Passage of a Congressional resolution which strips the Environmental Protection Agency
9 of its authority to regulate greenhouse gases.
10 4. Research on greenhouse gases.
11

12 We oppose:

- 13 1. Government regulations that place restrictions on existing off-road equipment emissions.
14 2. Any changes in the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards that reduce the
15 availability of trucks.
16 3. Government policies that are not based on scientific research.
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20 20. DISPOSAL OF WASTE 21

22 We urge appropriate local governments to provide refuse disposal services at a reasonable cost
23 to residents within their area if no private services are available.
24

25 We support:

- 26 1. Delegation agreements granting counties authority to regulate landfill operations within
27 their jurisdiction, including hours of operation and the height of landfills.
28 2. Regular and thorough inspection of waste disposal sites.
29 3. Improvement of regulations to ensure safe transportation of hazardous waste.
30 4. Aggressive enforcement of existing laws and regulatory programs which require
31 environmentally safe waste disposal systems.
32 5. Efforts to impose appropriate fines and penalties on waste disposal violations.
33 6. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus to encourage more stringent local enforcement of littering
34 laws.
35 7. Legislation allowing local governments to charge a higher tipping fee on special waste
36 than on residential waste.
37 8. Reasonable disposal fees on residential waste to help avoid open dumping in rural areas.
38 9. Legislation to amend the Used Tire Management Act to include the tire user fee in the
39 price of buying a new tire. We encourage the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
40 (EPA) to set up more drop off areas for used tires.
41 10. Efforts to have Illinois classify out-of-state waste as stringently as its classification in the
42 state of origin.
43 11. Legislation allowing farmers to burn or bury old agricultural buildings and brush on existing
44 sites.
45 12. Allowing the burning and burying of building debris in cases of natural disasters.
46 13. Changes in the Interstate Commerce Clause to allow local governments to charge a
47 higher tipping fee on out-of-area garbage.
48 14. Investigation of alternative methods of disposal of urban sludge containing heavy metals
49 and continued research on the safe application of urban sludge on agricultural farmland.
50 Agencies should make research results on immediate and long-term effects of sludge
51 application available to farmers.
52

53 We oppose:

- 54 1. Transportation of solid waste over long distances for disposal.
55

- 1 2. Efforts which lead to the importation of solid waste into rural areas without proper
2 consideration being given to residents neighboring the disposal site.
3

4 We will work with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Department of
5 Agriculture, and others to develop a program that provides an environmentally safe and
6 financially acceptable method to dispose of or recycle used oil and unwanted and unidentified
7 farm and home chemicals. Once waste is properly deposited into a program, no liability should
8 be placed on the original depositor.
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21. DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Drainage

We will:

1. Encourage more coordination among drainage districts and other government entities in a common watershed.
2. Encourage landowners within an inactive drainage district to reactivate the district or to consolidate the district with that of an active neighboring drainage district. In the event that reactivating or consolidating a drainage district is not feasible, we encourage all property owners, including state and federal entities, to maintain drainage systems on their property.
3. Oppose legislation that would forcibly diminish or usurp the power and authority of drainage districts.
4. Seek uniform interpretation of regulations to allow stream and drainage ditch maintenance practices consistent with good husbandry, such as removing silt, trees, restoring streambanks, and restoring drainage ditches to their optimal condition without the requirement of a permit.
5. Encourage better coordination among the various district offices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) of Engineers serving Illinois to foster more fair and consistent administration of the Clean Water Act and other laws and regulations.
6. Work with other groups to develop appropriate means to resolve drainage problems arising from land development and road construction. Such means should include holding developers financially responsible for damages done to agricultural drainage.
7. Seek legislation mandating that municipalities require developers to provide surety bonds to guarantee full compliance with the drainage law in regard to land development and road construction.
8. Encourage techniques and voluntary programs through agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that put more emphasis on stabilization of stream banks.

We support:

1. Enforcement of the concepts within the Illinois Drainage Code which prevent all governmental agencies from using public right-of-way to channel drainage water onto private land without considering the volume of water being drained or the absorption rate of the soils receiving the water.
2. A requirement that soil erosion control be considered as a part of all drainage plans.
3. Legislation which will deter unwarranted interference with drainage work.
4. A reasonable use standard for management of agricultural drainage.
5. Making NRCS the lead agency in determining if a drainage project needs a 404 permit and providing the local contact for that permitting process. If a 404 permit is needed, we support making the Corps the only agency in charge of issuing a permit for drainage projects.

- 1 6. Means to require any incorporated area or drainage district with a population of 5,000 or
2 more to pay downstream drainage districts for maintenance and expansion of waterways
3 that receive the accumulated increase in water flow.
- 4 7. Drainage districts as independent units of local government and their right to retain control.
- 5 8. Educational programs for drainage district commissioners concerning their duties, state
6 and federal regulations impacting them, and the need to properly and routinely maintain
7 the district's drainage facilities.
- 8 9. Drainage commissioners' authority to accumulate or build up a fund which shall not
9 exceed an amount equal to the total of five years annual maintenance assessment.
- 10 10. Efforts to exempt prior constructed waterways to drainage channels from archaeological
11 study requirements.
- 12 11. Efforts to remove beavers and their structures when they alter drainage resources.

13 **Stormwater Management**

14 We support:

- 15 1. Legislation requiring money collected for stormwater management be used exclusively for
16 control of runoff in the watershed where it was collected, not in an unrelated watershed.
- 17 2. Representation on any county stormwater management commission to have mandated
18 broad based makeup, including municipal, engineering, agricultural, industrial,
19 commercial, and homeowner voting members.
- 20 3. Legislation requiring municipalities to integrate stormwater management control structures
21 and plans into any new development.
- 22 4. The use of tax credits, abatements, or incentive payments to property owners who
23 construct, maintain, and use approved stormwater management devices (e.g. catch
24 ponds, lagoons, holding basins, terraces, contour farming, pasture land, timberland).
- 25 5. Efforts requiring that new commercial and residential developments be planned for
26 anticipated runoff and constructed with the structures necessary to control it.
- 27 6. Legislation to enable local governmental units to unite to solve stormwater problems
28 stemming from impervious surfaces in watersheds within their jurisdictions so long as the
29 power and authority of drainage districts are not forcibly usurped or diminished. For
30 purposes of stormwater management, farmland would not be considered an impervious
31 surface.
- 32 7. Efforts to amend the Soil and Water Conservation District Act to expand the role of the
33 Soil and Water Conservation Districts to address urban wetland and stormwater
34 management problems. The Soil and Water Conservation Districts should make every
35 effort to coordinate and cooperate with other organizations and agencies within the district
36 to achieve these goals.
- 37 8. A requirement for all municipalities to institute projects such as water retention basins and
38 dry dams that would collect water run-off and release it at a slower rate.
- 39 9. Amendments to the enabling legislation of stormwater management agencies that would
40 explicitly exempt agricultural land and practices.
- 41 10. Reducing the amount of taxes and fees assessed against property for stormwater
42 management purposes by the amount of taxes and fees assessed against that property by
43 a drainage district.

44 We oppose:

- 45 1. Legislation that would grant any stormwater management authority the power to regulate
46 farmland drainage.
 - 47 2. The establishment of a county stormwater runoff management planning commission
48 without voter approval.
 - 49 3. Any and all efforts to levy taxes, sell bonds, and collect service fees by a county
50 stormwater management planning commission unless approved by the voters.
 - 51 4. The use of eminent domain by a stormwater commission except for specific and
52 immediate use for stormwater runoff control.
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- 1 5. The involuntary dissolution of agricultural drainage districts and their administration and
2 taxing levy being assumed by the county stormwater commission.
- 3 6. Any efforts to require agriculture to pay for more than its fair share of any taxing plan or
4 any effort to force agricultural lands to receive excessive and unobstructed runoff caused
5 by upstream development that lacks reasonable stormwater management structures.
- 6 7. Any efforts to use revenues collected for stormwater runoff management for any other
7 purpose.

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11 **22. DUE PROCESS**
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13 We will support legislation, administrative rule, or administrative procedures requiring all
14 governmental agencies to notify landowners and farm operators of possible violations in writing,
15 stating specific findings and charges on all farm visits. All communications should be in writing
16 and dated. Landowners and farm operators should have a reasonable amount of time to correct
17 the possible violations before legal action is taken by the governmental agency. The
18 governmental agency should be required to prove intent to violate as a part of prosecution. Any
19 conviction should be based on due process, including trial by jury. If the governmental agency
20 should lose a court case, they should be held accountable for court costs and associated costs to
21 landowners and farm operators.

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25 **23. ENDANGERED SPECIES**
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27 We support a single agency be authorized to implement and enforce the various provisions and
28 regulations of the Endangered Species Act. Further, in projects affecting multiple states, we
29 support the use of the National Fish and Wildlife Services' endangered species list versus the
30 use of an individual state's endangered species list.

31
32 We oppose:

- 33 1. The recognition of species that are considered under threat versus endangered to be a
34 factor in determining the feasibility of development projects both public and private.
- 35 2. The recognition of a potential habitat, without the current presence of an endangered
36 species, as a reason for halting or delaying public and private development.

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40 **24. FARMING METHODS**
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42 We support methods of farming that result in:

- 43 1. A profit for the farm operator.
- 44 2. A clean environment.
- 45 3. The production of a safe food supply.
- 46 4. An adequate supply of high quality agricultural commodities to meet current and future
47 demand.

48
49 We are keenly aware that the means to accomplish these ends may vary from farm operation to
50 farm operation and that no single method of farming will work with every operator.

51
52 We support:

- 53 1. Research aimed at reducing overall inputs needed to sustain a profitable farming
54 operation.

2. Incentives that encourage farmers to accept the risk of testing non-traditional means of farming.
3. Efforts to provide information to farmers on proven means of improving the efficiency of inputs.
4. Research to study soil health and its future productivity.
5. The use of an integrated pest management program to control pests in crop production.

We oppose any attempt to mandate low input methods of farming.

25. FORESTRY

We will seek incentives for the development of private forest resources in Illinois.

We will encourage the planting of trees on land that is unable to meet conservation compliance standards to help control soil erosion and increase timber resources.

26. GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

We will become fully engaged in the global climate change debate and its impact on agriculture and the world.

We believe that honest scientific research, utilizing scientific method not consensus, should continue to conclusively determine the causes and impact of global climate change.

We support scientific research to document the regional value of agricultural practices in carbon sequestration. The United States Department of Agriculture should be the lead agency on researching carbon sequestration values for agriculture.

We will oppose:

1. Any regulations or treaties relative to global climate change that will unfairly impact U.S. agriculture and the U.S. economy.
2. The Kyoto Global Climate Change Treaty.

27. HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND

Currently, permanent structures such as terraces and diversions are not considered in determining the final erodibility classification for lands in developing conservation plans.

We will support efforts to alter Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) determination and classification to reflect the applied permanent conservation practices (i.e. terraces and diversions) that reduce the soil loss factor on soils that would normally be highly erodible. If the reduction in soil loss makes the land NON-HEL, the land should be so classified and remain so classified as long as the permanent conservation practices are maintained as designed.

Variances should be allowed in conservation practices for livestock farmers so they can utilize crops or crop residue without jeopardizing conservation compliance regulations. These practices should include, but not be limited to, pasturing livestock, chopping silage, harvesting crop residues, and manure incorporation.

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28. MINED LANDS

We will:

1. Continue to work with private, county, state, and federal groups and agencies in the development and strict enforcement of regulations for mined and undermined lands which will give proper consideration to needs and priorities of agriculture as well as energy and which will protect and restore agricultural lands.
2. Continue to work with other interested groups in developing reasonable solutions to problems of subsidence and means to minimize subsidence in future mining operations. The landowner shall receive fair compensation for any subsidence which occurs.
3. Encourage the Office of Mines and Minerals to include irrigation and other agricultural wells in the protection clauses under Illinois regulations concerning subsidence from underground mines.
4. Support a bonding requirement for coal companies that receive fly ash from coal combustion plants to address groundwater concerns and cleanup.
5. Develop an educational program on mineral and subsidence rights for landowners and support mining methods that maintain property values.
6. Review the impact of mining activity and how it affects the market value of property. Should this effect be negative, we will seek legislation to compensate landowners for this loss.
7. Seek legislation requiring mine operators to compensate landowners/tenants for production losses.
8. Seek legislation requiring coal mine operators to compensate landowners/tenants for increased cost of federal crop insurance when the farmland has been rerated due to mining operations.

We urge county Farm Bureaus to become heavily involved in reviewing proposed reclamation plans prior to the issuance of mining permits and to closely monitor such reclamation plans after mining to see they are being properly implemented.

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29. MINERAL INTERESTS

We will support:

1. A requirement that data from core tests of coal and fluorspar exploration be made available to the public after one year in the same manner that data on oil and gas wells are made available to the public.
 2. Legislation to require the owners of oil and gas interests that have been severed from the existing surface ownership to provide to the surface owner:
 - A. A 30-day notice before entry is made onto the surface for oil and gas exploration and recovery.
 - B. Compliance with minimum reclamation standards to minimize surface impacts of such operation and full clean-up of oil and gas sites.
 - C. Complete compensation payable to the surface owner or tenant for damages incurred during such operation and annual production losses incurred by the presence of roads, tank batteries, well heads, and oil and gas production equipment.
 - D. Complete compensation for the loss in land value due to drilling operations.
 3. Legislation requiring the operator of an oil and gas well to bury all electrical lines to a depth not less than 36 inches from the surface unless otherwise agreed to by the landowner.
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- 1 4. Continued efforts to strengthen and clarify existing rules and regulations relating to oil and
2 gas well site reclamation, well capping and well waste disposal, and to inform members of
3 those regulations.
- 4 5. Legislation which requires an operator of an oil or gas well to post and maintain a
5 performance bond to protect the surface owner in the event that the operator abandons
6 drilling, fails to plug the well(s) and/or restore the surface; or fails to provide complete
7 compensation to the landowner for damage.
- 8 6. Legislation requiring individuals or companies seeking to acquire oil and gas mineral
9 interests from landowners to provide the landowner a written summary of his/her legal and
10 property rights relating to the actual exploration and production of oil and gas prior to any
11 negotiation for the lease or purchase of such mineral interests.
- 12 7. Efforts by government agencies or private sector to address salt water contamination from
13 abandoned oil wells.
- 14 8. Recommendations of the Orphan Wells Task Force that address environmental problems
15 related to abandoned oil wells. A dedicated fund should be created for the implementation
16 of these recommendations. Consideration should be given to the addition of the state
17 motor fuel tax for a 10-year timeframe or to general revenues for the funding necessary to
18 implement the recommendations of the Task Force.
- 19 9. Efforts by government agencies or the private sector to create and maintain an accurate
20 and current listing of mineral rights owners for each tract of ground.
- 21 10. Legislation that would revert ownership interests of coal, oil, gas, and all other minerals (if
22 unclaimed, unused, or dormant for a period of up to 20 years) back to the surface estate
23 owner.
- 24 11. Landowners and owners of rural property being justly compensated by coalbed methane
25 operators when landowner's property is being drilled upon in the absence of an
26 agreement with the landowner.

27
28 We oppose the transfer or production of mineral rights or related rights (including subsidence
29 rights) by any public body without first offering those rights back to the current owner of the
30 surface estate.

34 **30. ORGANIC NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

35
36 Manure is a plant nutrient material. It is a valuable resource and, when combined with bedding
37 material, a residue source.

38
39 We believe:

- 40 1. County Farm Bureaus should develop a better understanding among farmers and the
41 public of issues concerning organic nutrient management.
 - 42 2. Ongoing research should be encouraged to determine air quality and odor parameters
43 that provide scientifically-proven levels for livestock health and worker safety.
 - 44 3. There must be no direct discharge from manure storage systems or livestock facilities to
45 surface waters, drainage ditches, or field tiles due to negligence, poor management, and
46 faulty structural design. Direct discharges due to natural causes should be exempt from
47 civil and punitive penalties and damages.
 - 48 4. Research on manure management is a high priority including such topics as odor
49 reduction, waste and nutrient management, and artificial wetland remediation of nutrients.
50 Some flexibility should be allowed in wetlands management.
 - 51 5. Any proposed law, rule, or regulation which would restrict a farmer's nutrient management
52 plan shall only be implemented if consistent with Best Management Practices (BMPs)
53 developed at the state level with the cooperation and assistance of our state land grant
54 institutions with considerations given for local conditions.
- 55

- 1 6. Government agencies must utilize proven scientific practices and cost/benefit analyses
2 when developing policies concerning organic nutrient management facilities and
3 application of manure.
- 4 7. Additional government cost-share funding should be made available to farmers for
5 constructing manure handling facilities to correct existing problems.
- 6 8. That the development and enforcement of organic nutrient management standards are
7 best handled at the state level but any dialog on national environmental standards or
8 legislation for organic nutrient management must be based on proven science and
9 generally-accepted agricultural BMPs and should comply with the above points. The
10 authority for enforcement and implementation of these standards should be clearly defined
11 to protect farmers from differing interpretations by state or federal agencies.

12
13 We support:

- 14 1. Programs to educate farmers on techniques regarding properly-managed organic nutrient
15 systems.
- 16 2. A public relations program to emphasize methods by which farmers protect the
17 environment by using properly-managed organic nutrient systems.

18
19 We oppose requiring livestock operations to obtain permits for application of livestock manure.
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23 **31. PESTICIDE APPLICATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

24
25 Proper understanding and handling of crop protection products is important to every farmer. We
26 support the pesticide applicator certification procedure as a means to assure society that people
27 who handle these products are trained and knowledgeable.
28

29 We will encourage people applying crop protection products to be aware of liabilities for drift to
30 neighboring specialty crops that are pesticide-sensitive.
31

32 We further encourage people using pesticides for non-agricultural use to become better educated
33 on the safe use of these chemicals and how they can affect the world around us.
34

35 We urge the Illinois Department of Agriculture to:

- 36 1. Review the incorrect Illinois Pesticide Applicators' License exam answers with the
37 applicant. This review would allow farmers the opportunity to improve their knowledge
38 in the areas where it is needed.
- 39 2. Give individuals the option of either taking training and testing of all license categories
40 online or in the classroom.
- 41 3. Amend current private applicator license procedures to create a license that is valid for a
42 five year period.

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48 **32. PESTICIDE RECORDKEEPING**

49 We will support:

- 50 1. Federal law that mandates U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to use university data
51 and other credible agricultural industry sources to determine actual pesticide usage levels
- 52 2. Restricted use pesticide recordkeeping and will monitor to see that the interests of farmers
53 are protected and the confidentiality of the farmers and their records is not compromised.
- 54 3. The Illinois Department of Agriculture as the lead state agency to implement and
55 administer these recordkeeping provisions. The pesticide recordkeeping requirements

1 should not infer any additional liability to a farmer for pesticides applied according to label
2 instructions.

- 3 4. Increased funding for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to increase
4 credible information on pesticide use collected by the National Agricultural Statistics
5 Service (NASS).
- 6 5. A change in statute and/or regulations that would allow a custom applicator service to be
7 assigned the responsibility of keeping pesticide application records for
8 landowners/operators.

11 12 **33. RIVER CONSERVANCY DISTRICTS**

13
14 We will support legislation to:

- 15 1. Require petition signatures containing at least 10 percent of the registered voters within a
16 proposed district be secured in order to place the question of creating a new district on the
17 ballot.
- 18 2. Provide means for disconnecting lands not benefited from an established district.
- 19 3. Require wider publication and notice of public hearings.
- 20 4. Provide improved representation from all counties having lands included in a district.

21 22 23 24 **34. RIVERS, LEVEES AND FLOODPLAINS**

25 26 **Rivers**

27 We will:

- 28 1. Aggressively pursue actions in Congress and appropriate federal and state agencies to
29 ensure that we have an efficient and competitive transportation system through which we
30 can effectively move agricultural and commercial products.
- 31 2. Work aggressively with other interested groups to improve the lock and dam systems on
32 the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. As a part of that effort, we support construction of
33 1,200-foot locks on the Mississippi River at least at Keokuk and below and on the Illinois
34 River at least at Peoria and below.
- 35 3. Urge a Midwestern, multi-state effort to review results of existing river and related studies
36 and identify impacts of associated state and federal regulations. We also support the
37 development of a balanced and comprehensive river management plan by the U.S. Army
38 Corps of Engineers (Corps) under the auspices of the Mississippi River Commission
39 (MRC). Based on these studies, we will promote a multiple-use strategy for the Upper
40 Mississippi River and its navigable tributaries to serve agriculture, industry, recreation,
41 transportation, and the environment. A comprehensive plan must be fair, clear, and
42 equitable for all counties adjacent to or affected by river flooding. Money appropriated for
43 projects should be used by that project if at all possible.
- 44 4. Encourage the MRC to use its authority to promote improvements to navigation, economic
45 development, flood control, recreation, and environment within the Upper Mississippi River
46 basin.
- 47 5. Seek representation on the MRC to include at least one member from the Upper
48 Mississippi River area.
- 49 6. Encourage members of Congress to become actively involved in the Mississippi River
50 Congressional Caucus.
- 51 7. Support efforts to increase the Operations and Maintenance budget to maintain
52 navigation, recreation, and flood control systems.

1 We support:

- 2 1. Efforts to come to a mutually acceptable revision to the Missouri River Master Water
3 Control Manual while protecting against proposals that would regulate the river's flow to
4 the detriment of waterway navigation and/or flood control system.
- 5 2. Requiring a benefit:cost analysis of the effects of changing the hours of operations of any
6 lock and dam. This analysis should look at the effect on the Corps, local communities,
7 and the businesses who use or are affected by the lock and dam. Public input should be
8 sought.
- 9 3. A congressional line item appropriation for the maintenance and operation of the
10 Kaskaskia River lock and dam.
- 11 4. Requiring government agencies to send notification about new streambank initiatives to
12 landowners whose property is adjacent to and may be impacted by those initiatives.

14 **Levees**

15 Illinois has greatly benefited from the construction of flood control levees and their associated
16 systems along its rivers. Many have now exceeded their life expectancy and flooding poses a
17 significant threat to surrounding property.

18
19 We believe federal and state government agencies should be committed to assisting with the
20 timely repair and maintenance of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries. After a disaster
21 occurs, repairs should be made in "emergency" mode. We believe adequate funds should be
22 made available to the Corps, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other appropriate
23 agencies to assist in the repair of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries.

24
25 We support:

- 26 1. Efforts to remove silt from rivers and to promote the use of that material behind the levee
27 for strengthening the levee system.
- 28 2. Efforts to secure federal and state funds for constructing certified levees and associated
29 systems on major rivers. To evaluate the appropriateness of that funding, we support the
30 concept of using Risk Informed Decision Framework (RIDF) that would address four
31 evaluation areas: national economic development, environmental quality, regional
32 economic development, and other social effects. The RIDF approach should recognize
33 the potential for future economic development. We do not support the use of the national
34 economic development benefit:cost ratio as the sole or controlling standard for waterway
35 and flood control projects.
- 36 3. Equitable treatment of intangible benefits in calculating the benefits of levee construction
37 projects. We encourage the Corps to fully restore damaged levees to no less than pre-
38 existing conditions in a timely fashion.
- 39 4. Efforts to allow drainage and levee districts to restore a levee to its highest approved flood
40 frequency design and/or profile without being limited by water level mitigation
41 requirements.
- 42 5. A uniform federal floodplain standard (also adopted by the states) allowing a one-foot rise
43 in floodwater height for flood protection projects on major rivers and other bodies of water
44 bordering two or more adjoining states.
- 45 6. Streamlining the process of permitting the repair and/or construction of levees and other
46 flood control devices while maintaining the strict adherence to that section within the
47 Illinois Rivers, Lakes and Streams Act; that requires permitting prior to repair and/or
48 construction.
- 49 7. Using hydrology studies and other pertinent information developed within the
50 Comprehensive Plan to expedite the permitting process for flood control projects within
51 the scope of the plan. A timeline should be developed to establish target beginning and
52 completion dates for each project within the Comprehensive Plan to help move those
53 projects along in a more efficient and timely manner.

- 1 8. Legislation that provides the Corps the authority and funding to develop and construct
- 2 streambank and shoreline protection projects to prevent erosion damages to infrastructure.
- 3 9. Adoption of Base Flood Elevation impact mitigation standards for construction within the
- 4 floodway in Illinois similar to those in Iowa or Missouri so that the same level of activity
- 5 can occur on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River as does in those adjoining states.
- 6

7 We will:

- 8 1. Support the Corps' Comprehensive Plan with the following conditions:
 - 9 A. The Plan must include reconstruction of existing levees and ancillary flood
 - 10 reduction system components to ensure they function at their approved design
 - 11 capacity.
 - 12 B. Existing levees within the reach of the Plan that are of sufficient height but lack
 - 13 other necessary features (such as seepage wells and proper slope) should be
 - 14 allowed to be improved to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - 15 (FEMA) certifiable 100-year flood frequency protection.
 - 16 C. The Len Small Levee and Drainage District should be incorporated as part of the
 - 17 Plan. It should enjoy the same right of improvement and rehabilitation as is
 - 18 afforded other levee districts not eligible for 500-year flood frequency protection.
 - 19 D. All acres currently protected by levees should maintain at least their current level of
 - 20 protection.
- 21 2. Support full federal funding for improvement to levees to maintain the existing level of
- 22 flood frequency protection when induced increases in floodwaters occur due to the
- 23 adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for Flood Control.
- 24 3. Encourage the American Farm Bureau Federation to aggressively seek assistance on a
- 25 national basis.
- 26 4. Urge the Corps to adopt water flow management policies that avoid the flooding of
- 27 farmland situated below any reservoir, dam, or behind any levee system managed or
- 28 controlled by the Corps.
- 29 5. Urge state and federal agencies to provide timely assistance to local levees during a crisis.
- 30

31 **Floodplains**

32 The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) should be designed to provide insurance, not

33 regulate land use. It should not be designed to revert the floodplain to its (historic, former)

34 undeveloped state. Furthermore, rules and regulations regarding floodplain management should

35 not supersede private property rights.

36

37 Agriculture in a floodplain should be given recognition as providing positive benefits to the

38 environment and the public good. These intangible benefits should receive the same

39 consideration in benefit:cost analysis as do other environmental benefits.

40

41 A one-size-fits-all approach to floodplain regulations does not accommodate the unique physical

42 differences among floodplains. Regulations, including NFIP, should recognize those differences,

43 which range from the expansive floodplains of major rivers to narrow riverines to non-riverine

44 depressions.

45

46 We will seek revisions in FEMA regulations to:

- 47 1. Fund and allow the Army Corps of Engineers to coordinate all flood fighting efforts.
- 48 2. Increase efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation of FEMA and other
- 49 government agencies in order to streamline the process to deliver emergency assistance
- 50 in a timely manner during a disaster and the disaster recovery process.
- 51 3. Allow the limited issuance of certain construction permits by units of local government
- 52 where the applicant has assumed all risk for flood damage to the structure without
- 53 jeopardizing the receipt of NFIP funds and other federal monies for those who wish to
- 54 participate in federal insurance, disaster, and loan programs.
- 55

- 1 4. Provide NFIP and disaster payment eligibility for production agriculture facilities and farm
2 residences protected by a levee, including levees that provide protection from less than
3 100-year floods. The insurance offered for such structures should be at a rate which
4 reflects the degree of protection provided by the levee.
- 5 5. Allow structures located in a floodplain that are “substantially damaged” by means other
6 than a flood to be rebuilt without regard to NFIP regulations and to maintain flood
7 insurance eligibility.

8
9 We support:

- 10 1. Amendments to federal regulations and policy that would require dewatering of agricultural
11 land as part of flood recovery efforts.
- 12 2. FEMA interim guidelines for wet flood-proofing of agricultural structures and efforts to
13 make them permanent.
- 14 3. Allowing the replacement construction costs of a structure to be used instead of market
15 value to measure the damage to a structure for purposes of determining whether
16 “substantial damage” has been done.
- 17 4. Revising NFIP regulations to allow counties and municipalities, at the local unit’s
18 discretion, to sell to private owners those properties bought out by FEMA. In such cases,
19 the property should include an easement restricting surface development rights but
20 allowing normal agricultural practices.

21
22 We should increase efforts to educate and inform legislators, regulators, media, farmers, and
23 environmental leaders about the economic and societal benefits and issues associated with the
24 agricultural and commercial use of expansive floodplains.

25
26 If a levee’s flood level protection certification would be lowered due to a revised flow frequency
27 study, structures that existed behind the levee prior to the re-certification should be grandfathered
28 and managed under the NFIP as though the higher flood protection certification still applies.
29 Structures built after the levee’s re-certification should be managed under the rules that apply
30 with the then current certified flood protection level.

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34 **35. SITING OF NON-AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITIES**

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We believe non-agricultural pollution control facilities should be sited so they will not be hazardous to the public health, safety and welfare.

39 We support:

- 40 1. Legislation specifying that publication requirements for public hearings on the siting of
41 solid waste disposal facilities be the same as those of the Illinois Truth in Taxation Act.
- 42 2. The ability of a municipality to reject the location of a landfill within 1 1/2 miles of the
43 municipality’s boundary.

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We encourage county Farm Bureaus to actively monitor permit applications for siting of non-agricultural pollution control facilities submitted to their County Boards.

48 We will oppose attempts to weaken the role of local governments or the criteria by which the sites
49 are judged in the siting of non-agricultural pollution control facilities.

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1 **36. SOIL CONSERVATION**

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3 Soil erosion is a threat to the long-term productivity of agriculture. Farmers and landowners
4 should do all they can feasibly do to implement soil conservation practices.

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6 We support:

- 7 1. Soil conservation programs using education, voluntary compliance, financial incentives
8 and other non-punitive means to encourage compliance. Farmers should not be
9 penalized for a "first offense" failure to meet residue requirements if they have made a
10 good faith effort to follow their conservation plan, or for failure to obtain mandated residue
11 cover following crop failure. Any penalties for subsequent violations should not exceed
12 the farm program benefits on the tract number in violation. The provision of cost sharing
13 by government agencies must be a prerequisite to any compliance program.
- 14 2. Increasing funding and technical support for various state and federal programs to assist
15 farmers, landowners, and drainage districts in controlling erosion and runoff. Available
16 resources should be targeted to those areas where greatest problems exist and programs
17 are being implemented.
- 18 3. Inclusion of conservation practices that address soil erosion, sediment control, and water
19 quality concerns brought on by community development in the Natural Resources
20 Conservation Services' (NRCS) National Handbook of Conservation Practices.
- 21 4. Unrestricted technical and educational services of NRCS to municipalities, other local
22 governments, and non-governmental entities within funding parameters.
- 23 5. Legislation that would protect landowners from liability resulting from the malfunction of
24 terraces and structures constructed according to NRCS guidelines.
- 25 6. Amendment of the election process currently used by Soil and Water Conservation
26 Districts (SWCDs) to allow SWCD directors to be elected with the stipulation that the
27 election be structured so that no more than one director may be elected from any
28 township in any election.
- 29 7. Maintaining county SWCDs under the administration of the Illinois Department of
30 Agriculture and funding for SWCD staff at compensation levels comparable to that of state
31 employees.
- 32 8. Increased funding for SWCDs to implement voluntary streambank stabilization programs.
- 33 9. Research on the concept of economic benefits of green payments to farmers.
- 34 10. A pilot program whose concepts would include guaranteeing farmers a payment for
35 implementing new conservation practices. This could be initiated through a public/private
36 partnership program.
- 37 11. Including funding for technical assistance in the overall costs to implement government
38 programs addressing natural resource or environmental issues.
- 39 12. Adequate state and federal funding for updating soil surveys.
- 40 13. Allowing an exemption to the NRCS manual for Environmental Quality Incentives Program
41 (EQIP) money to be used for streambank stabilization practices prior to the adjacent
42 land's expiration in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract or a Conservation
43 Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contract.

44
45 We oppose the use of state or federal conservation funds for conservation practices on land that
46 is in the process of being developed. The SWCD and/or the NRCS shall require monies to be
47 returned if land is converted to non-production agriculture use in ten years or less after receipt of
48 state or federal funds. This may include land that has been platted or sold to a developer.

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50 Local governments and developers are encouraged to utilize all practical means to control non-
51 farm soil erosion.

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37. VOLUNTARY ECOSYSTEM PRESERVATION

We believe there is an opportunity to preserve in a natural condition at least a portion of Illinois ecosystems. We are willing to work with others to accomplish this goal.

A preservation habitat program should:

- 1. Be voluntary.
- 2. Not use eminent domain.
- 3. Not rely on property taxes.
- 4. Provide the ability for the landowner to terminate the agreement.
- 5. Have no negative impact on adjoining property owners.

38. WATER QUALITY

We support:

- 1. County Farm Bureau efforts to develop a better understanding of water concerns in their immediate area.
- 2. Programs to educate farmers and the general public of the need to protect water quality and the various management methods to accomplish that protection.
- 3. The use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for application of agricultural crop protection products, commercial fertilizers, and manure to minimize chances for water contamination.
- 4. The development of new and the enhancement of existing incentives for adopting voluntary BMPs on all private land to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.
- 5. Public Law 83-566 and its emphasis on flood control projects should be reevaluated to consider its use in the water quality area of watersheds and public water supplies.
- 6. The use of water consumption fees collected from local users of water from a federally constructed lake for purposes of reimbursement to local landowners who adapt conservation practices which contribute to improved water quality in the lake.
- 7. Establishing a voluntary program for agriculture concerning Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulations supported by research and scientific data, with the requirement to prove economic benefits for suggested changes. Any program should present and maintain a positive image with the general public.

The implementation of the Clean Water Act and the focus on the non-point source pollution provisions have been based on "public perception" rather than sound scientific data. Scientific data should be used as the basis for informed action. We urge immediate priority be given to research funding on the impacts of agricultural crop protection products, fertilizers, and non-agricultural chemical applications on water quality.

We oppose:

- 1. Designating water flow from farm fields through or over conveyances, such as drain tile or grass waterways, as a point source of pollution under the Clean Water Act.
- 2. Fines, assessments, and penalties on non-point source pollution allegedly caused by agriculture but not confirmed by scientific data.

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3 **39. WATER WITHDRAWALS**

4 The ability of a landowner to reasonably use water on or beneath his property is a right to be
5 enjoyed. This right should not be taken without due process of law. Just compensation should
6 be given to those regions or individuals whose ability to use the water is diminished.

7 We strongly encourage and support the establishment of water management districts, by
8 referendum of affected property owners, for the purpose of managing the water resource. Water
9 management districts should be established within aquifers or recharge lines and be governed by
10 elected or appointed directors who are resident landowners representing the various water users
11 in the district. Regulations, developed by districts, should be based upon the availability of supply
12 and needs and desires of affected property owners. In lieu of existing locally-led water
13 management districts, Soil and Water Conservation Districts should receive support to implement
14 provisions of the Water Use Act to collect necessary data on water wells.

15
16 Water withdrawal regulations should recognize the responsibility of all users to construct and
17 maintain proper wells. Current Illinois guidelines for the construction of wells and the type and
18 setting of pumps accomplish this. They should not be changed unless the need for modification
19 is shown from facts and research data collected from scientifically valid groundwater studies.
20 It is the duty of all users to conserve water to avoid waste of a critical natural resource.
21 Conservation programs should encourage use of water recycling where feasible.

22
23 Renewable fuel producers should be encouraged to use recycled effluent water produced by
24 local municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the production process.

25
26 Agricultural uses must receive a high priority in the allocation of water supplies. Consideration
27 should be given to businesses or consumers which would feel an economic impact from water
28 restrictions. We oppose the granting of eminent domain authority for water resource exploration.

29
30 We recommend continuing research on groundwater availability, recharge and the efficient use of
31 water resources. Such research should be designed to develop a conservation program with
32 emphasis on individual, local and state participation. We will support local, state, and federal
33 appropriations to bring about this research and technical assistance from state agencies to assist
34 local water planning and management efforts.

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36 We urge the Illinois State Water Survey to monitor ground water movement in aquifers to
37 determine where water shortages may potentially arise.

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41 **40. WATERSHEDS**

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43 We encourage:

- 44 1. Watershed projects be conducted with consideration of the entire watershed as a whole
45 rather than just a small portion of the watershed.
 - 46 2. Agricultural involvement in watershed planning using voluntary Best Management
47 Practices (BMPs) to address water resource issues.
 - 48 3. Efforts by agencies to utilize farmer input and to develop voluntary, cost-incentive
49 programs.
 - 50 4. Drainage district involvement in watershed group planning efforts.
 - 51 5. County Farm Bureau water quality committees to redirect and re-engineer their focus to
52 include all natural resources in a watershed.
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1 We support increased funding for comprehensive watershed planning and voluntary
2 implementation of the corresponding programs. We believe these programs should be
3 permanently funded through the Illinois Department of Agriculture and implemented by the Soil
4 and Water Conservation Districts.

5
6 Water management programs should not restrict the ability of landowners to provide effective
7 drainage and flood control in rural and urban areas.
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10 11 **41. WEED CONTROL**

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13 We will:

- 14 1. Seek to improve the enforcement of the Illinois Noxious Weed Law.
- 15 2. Support efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Illinois
16 Department of Agriculture to restrict the importation and sale of viable Niger Thistle seed.
- 17 3. Provide information to counties on the process by which weeds can be classified as
18 noxious.
- 19 4. Seek to improve the purity of crop and bird seed and sterilization of all weed seed
20 included in bird seed to deter the spread of viable weed seed.
- 21 5. Work with the Farm Service Agency and other governmental agencies in developing an
22 effective eradication program for multiflora rose.
- 23 6. Support the development of a control program for autumn olive and seek the necessary
24 funds from the state and federal government to adequately eradicate the weed.
- 25 7. Strongly support legislation to require all governmental agencies to develop and
26 implement proper management practices to control the population and spread of noxious
27 and other weeds on all their properties.
- 28 8. Work to add Shattercane, Bull Thistle, Tall Thistle, and Poison Hemlock to the Illinois
29 Noxious Weed List.
- 30 9. Encourage the Illinois Department of Agriculture to notify the county boards whenever
31 there is a change to the Illinois Noxious Weed Law and/or rules.
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35 **42. WETLANDS**

36
37 We recognize that while our country has had a history of programs encouraging the conversion of
38 wetlands to uses considered more productive, public opinion now sees significant benefits in
39 protecting wetlands. We agree wetlands provide certain benefits and support reasonable efforts
40 to discourage their conversion. However, this should not mean that in all instances wetland
41 conversion is unnecessary or that private landowners should solely bear the cost of protecting
42 wetlands. Any effort to protect wetlands should recognize the rights of private property owners
43 and drainage districts.
44

45 We will aggressively seek, in Congress and the Illinois General Assembly, legislative solutions to
46 protect private property rights.
47

48 We support:

- 49 1. A definition that requires all three benchmarks of hydric soil, hydrophytic vegetation, and
50 standing water during a predominance of the growing season, supported by a minimum of
51 three consecutive years of sampling data, before a wetland designation is made. Any
52 definition should be subject to public review and legislative approval.
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- 1 2. Scientific soil vegetation sampling on all lands that are to be designated a wetland. Data
2 should be made available to the landowner and be maintained by the Natural Resource
3 Conservation Service (NRCS) as long as that parcel continues to be designated a wetland.
- 4 3. An equitable wetland designation appeals process for landowners.
- 5 4. A mapping program, as a prerequisite to regulation, which:
6 A. Accurately identifies land which has a predominance of hydric soils, hydrophytic
7 vegetation and standing water.
8 B. Has been subject to the review of locally affected landowners and operators.
9 C. Has a standard interpretation from the state Natural Resources Conservation
10 Service office which ensures equality across county lines.
- 11 5. The exemption from regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and
12 Swampbuster of prior converted cropland and any land that has been cropped in at least
13 six of the last ten years.
- 14 6. Compensation to property owners when their ability to make management decisions as to
15 the best economic use of their property is restricted by laws or regulations aimed at
16 protecting wetlands.
- 17 7. The ability for private wetland landowners to be able to mitigate wetland conversion on an
18 acre-for-acre or value-for-value basis.
- 19 8. Compensation to local units of government which lose tax revenue due to governmental
20 development or acquisition of wetland areas.
- 21 9. Education programs which seek to inform landowners of the benefits of wetlands and to
22 urge voluntary conservation of wetland areas.
- 23 10. Placement of regulatory control of wetlands within the United States Department of
24 Agriculture (USDA).
- 25 11. State regulatory control of wetlands programs if they are administered through the Illinois
26 Department of Agriculture. State regulations should be no more restrictive than federal
27 regulations.
- 28 12. The ability to maintain existing drainage structures and tile lines without prior permits or
29 permission.
30

31 We will oppose the delineation of these areas as linear wetlands:

- 32 1. Man-made drainage ditches.
- 33 2. Fence lines.
- 34 3. Either existing waterways or land previously used for natural drainage.
35

36 We will make it a high priority in the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act to make the USDA
37 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) responsible for identification and regulation of
38 all wetlands.
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42 **43. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

44 We believe agriculture maintains a vital role in ensuring a safe food supply for future generations.
45 The role of farmers in this system is to be responsible managers of the land and their business
46 operations. In order to achieve these goals, effective wildlife management is essential.
47

48 The following basic principles are key to effectively implementing wildlife management:

- 49 1. Programs that strengthen a landowner's and operator's ability to control wildlife that cause
50 damage on property they own or operate.
- 51 2. Educational and informational programs for landowners and operators that promote
52 wildlife management and provide additional income opportunities.
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1 We support:

- 2 1. Quality wildlife management based on economic, biological, and sociological practices.
- 3 2. Assistance for landowners and operators in implementing management practices that
4 enhance wildlife populations conducive to the economic well-being of landowners and
5 operators. We support legislation or administrative rule changes, including those that
6 govern controls in urban/adjacent agricultural areas, in order to achieve these goals.
- 7 3. A wildlife nuisance permit program that embodies three elements to control nuisance
8 animals causing damage to crops and property. Those elements are:
9 A. Harvest time and management flexibility.
10 B. Transferability of permits.
11 C. Sufficient permits to reduce property damage.
- 12 4. Hunting and trapping because we recognize their vital role in wildlife management, their
13 economic benefit to the state and its citizens, and that they are a legitimate form of
14 recreation that provides positive influences in our society.

15
16 To accomplish these goals, we further support:

- 17 1. Streamlining the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) licensing and permitting
18 process to make it more efficient and beneficial for the landowner.
 - 19 2. Efforts to protect rights of farmers and farmowners with problems of trespassing or
20 unauthorized entry by individuals and to require potential users to ask for written
21 permission from landowners or tenants before using the land.
 - 22 3. Legislation that would make trespassing, when associated with deer driving, a class C
23 misdemeanor.
 - 24 4. Incentive programs to enhance wildlife habitat, especially on environmentally-sensitive
25 areas.
 - 26 5. Efforts to compensate landowners and operators for damage to agricultural crops,
27 property, and livestock arising from wildlife especially on private property near areas
28 managed by IDNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and acknowledgement
29 by IDNR as well as FWS in the vital role of farmowners and operators in the feeding of the
30 various forms of wildlife present on lands under our control. This should include
31 compensation to owners/operators for the value added to wildlife community present on
32 our lands.
 - 33 6. Programs to control wildlife populations on public lands and in urban areas, including
34 agricultural land within urban areas, where problems exist.
 - 35 7. Expanded access, with the landowner's permission, to public and private lands to allow
36 more hunting opportunities.
 - 37 8. Efforts to extend all firearm, muzzleloading, and late winter antlerless-only deer seasons.
 - 38 9. The IDNR issuing combination permits consisting of one antlered and two antlerless deer
39 and bonus doe-only permits to hunters to control over-population of deer and reduce
40 health and safety concerns.
 - 41 10. Providing incentives to hunters through the Sportsmen for Hunger program and various
42 other means to help manage the doe population.
 - 43 11. Encouraging the IDNR to pursue enterprising methods, such as youth or handicap hunts,
44 to control wildlife in areas where problems exist.
 - 45 12. The opportunity for agricultural landowner participation in the initial decision-making
46 process to release wildlife that would have potential impact on agriculture. We also
47 support the requirement for public notification and public hearings in the proposed release
48 area 90 days prior to the final decision concerning this wildlife release. Landowners
49 should have the right to stop a release on their property.
 - 50 13. Encouraging IDNR to allow landowners/tenants to purchase additional firearm deer and
51 turkey permits without having to surrender their landowner/tenant free permits.
 - 52 14. Encouraging the IDNR to allow the harvest of both hens and toms during any turkey
53 season in those counties where population control is necessary.
- 54
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- 1 15. The establishment of an additional fall firearm season for hen-only after the regulation
2 turkey season is complete in those counties where population control is necessary.
- 3 16. Legislation or administrative rule to allow landowners to assign free landowner/tenant
4 permits for deer or turkey to family members outside of the household.
- 5 17. The IDNR providing landowners extra free doe permits for firearm and archery seasons.
- 6 18. Legislation requiring the IDNR to amend the permitting process allowing for fair, non-
7 preferential access and earlier permit acquisition (February or March) at reasonable fees
8 to non-resident hunters. We also support requiring the IDNR to eliminate the cap on non-
9 resident archery permits and to issue all permits allowed by law. We will aggressively
10 pursue legislation to eliminate the cap on non-resident archery permits.
- 11 19. The ability of landowners to lease their land for hunting. Landowners should not be
12 required to have a minimum number of acres or be required to become an outfitter.
- 13 20. Programs that encourage and educate youth on hunting and retain hunters in order to
14 enhance the economic viability of agriculture.
- 15 21. Eliminating the law requiring landowner(s) and immediate family members to purchase
16 habitat stamps to hunt on property they own or operate.
- 17 22. Legislation to allow individual members of farm partnerships and non-resident landowners
18 to obtain free landowner deer and turkey permits.
- 19 23. The ability of landowners to obtain a muzzleloader permit without going through the lottery
20 system.
- 21 24. An increase in the number of resident and non-resident firearm permits issued in each
22 county.
- 23 25. An increase in bag limits for the turkey season and also support an extension of the paid
24 permit season.
- 25 26. A year-round season for Illinois residents to hunt, trap, or dispatch resident Canada geese.
- 26 27. The removal of resident geese from protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916.
- 27 28. Assisting the University of Illinois Extension to develop a basic fee hunting lease
28 agreement.
- 29 29. Requiring that deer and turkey hunting permits be issued without charge to the lineal
30 descendants of an Illinois resident who owns at least 40 acres of Illinois land, provided
31 that the lineal descendants hunt only upon that landowner's land.
- 32 30. The late winter antlerless-only deer season shall be open in those counties with a firearm
33 or muzzleloader season.
- 34 31. Amending the rules for issuance of firearm deer and turkey hunting permits to allow
35 landowners/tenants the ability to buy a hunting permit and be eligible for the first drawing
36 of hunting permits.

37 We will:

- 38 1. Continue to work with IDNR and others to monitor and fine tune the definition of outfitters,
39 the registration program, and the guidelines for outfitters.
- 40 2. Assist members in utilizing the law which provides for an IDNR permit to control wildlife
41 where it is causing damage to crops or property.
- 42 3. Serve as a source of information for landowners on how they can benefit from voluntary,
43 fee-based programs for recreational activities on their land, how landowners can
44 participate in these voluntary programs, what programs (such as Access Illinois Outdoors)
45 currently exist, and further investigate other possibilities.

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47 We urge the American Farm Bureau Federation to more aggressively seek landowner authority
48 to control federally regulated wildlife that is creating a nuisance.

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50 We oppose the release of elk in Illinois.

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44. EMINENT DOMAIN

We will seek legislation providing:

1. That a public hearing be held before any land could be optioned or purchased by a public body for any purpose.
2. That property owners' rights should be fully explained at the hearing.
3. That at least 60 days prior to the hearing, the public body proposing the acquisition send written notice of its intentions to property owners whose land would be taken or damaged.
4. For a cause of action and standing for nearby landowners in court cases involving eminent domain. This should allow landowners in the impacted area the opportunity to seek monetary damages when their property values are adversely affected by such acquisitions.

We support:

1. Legislation to restrict the use of eminent domain to acquire property for wetlands mitigation, buffer zones, water diversion, or retention as part of a river flood management plan.
2. Restricting the use of eminent domain by a public utility for the installation of pipelines and other utilities.
3. Legislation in which fair market value compensation of private property taken as a part of an eminent domain proceeding receives an exemption from capital gains taxes.

We oppose:

1. The granting of quick-take powers to economic development authorities.
2. The use of eminent domain to acquire properties intended for future sale.
3. The use of eminent domain in the taking of private property for the purpose of economic development by private parties.
4. The use of eminent domain for the purposes of economic development when the project in question has not received approval for construction.

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45. FARMLAND OWNERSHIP

The type of domestic ownership of farmland, farm facilities, or farm commodities should not infringe on the economic opportunities of the individual farmer.

We will:

1. Oppose preferential tax treatment of foreign investments in agricultural land under federal tax law or treaty provisions.
2. Insist that all foreign investors be required to conform to all local, state and federal tax laws.
3. Continue to monitor the effect of foreign investment in agriculture, food distribution, banking, insurance and other businesses in the United States.
4. Support the continuation of programs to require the reporting of alien ownership of farmland in the United States.
5. Support state and national programs and policies which encourage and facilitate the ownership of farmland by farmers and those directly involved with the practice of farming.
6. Continue to monitor the effects of the entry of non-agricultural entities into farming or farm ownership.

1 **46. GOVERNMENTAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND OWNERSHIP**
2

3 We will support legislation:

- 4 1. Providing for NO INVOLUNTARY NET LOSS of private property ownership in any state.
5 All future forced acquisition or sanctioning of property by federal, state, or local
6 government agencies except by universities for agricultural research must be balanced by
7 disbursement or sales of property of equivalent value from government inventories within
8 the state.
9 2. To prohibit additional purchases of real estate for recreational or preservation purposes by
10 any level of government unless the property remains on local tax rolls at the prevailing tax
11 rates and prevailing assessed value of similar local properties.
12 3. Providing for a method of compensating units of local government by the state or federal
13 government where the amount of land taken by the state or federal government severely
14 reduces property tax revenues or where the demand for local services related to the state
15 or federal-owned or managed property is substantially increased.
16 4. Requiring governmental units maintaining highways, parks or other areas which increase
17 road use or require added police or fire protection or other emergency services to
18 compensate the appropriate local bodies maintaining those roads or providing such
19 services.
20 5. Providing for a hearing and a referendum of registered voters in the county or counties in
21 which land is sought by a local governmental unit for recreational, forest or conservation
22 purposes. Existing public lands should be developed for the purpose for which it was
23 purchased before additional property is acquired.
24 6. Providing that agricultural land owned by local governmental units may be rented for
25 agricultural purposes until developed.
26 7. To ensure that those government-owned lands, which are commercially farmed and
27 produce a cash crop, should not be farmed by government, but instead are leased to
28 farmers with the exception of those used for agricultural research.
29 8. Requiring the governmental unit to offer land for resale to the previous owner or their heirs
30 at the lower of the original purchase price or current market value if the property acquired
31 by an agency will not be used for the original purpose for which it was acquired or to
32 adjacent landowners if the original landowner or their heirs do not exercise the right to
33 purchase. If the original or adjacent landowner does not exercise the right to purchase
34 within one year of the offer to sell, then the governmental unit should be allowed to sell
35 such property to other interested parties. We support a sunset time limit of ten years for
36 the property to be used as intended or the buy-back provisions go into effect.
37 9. Providing that on land owned by the State or local taxing authority where benefits from
38 barter or income are received from such land, a portion of this income or exchange will be
39 returned to the county in which the land is located in lieu of taxes.
40 10. Requiring units of government acquiring railroad right-of-way property (i.e. for trails) to
41 follow the same provisions for fencing and farm crossings as the railroad was required to
42 follow.
43 11. Requiring public bodies making acquisition of property for public purposes to make
44 financial settlement within 60 days of the date that the purchase price is determined or be
45 required to pay the property owner the prime interest rate plus 2 percent interest per year
46 on the purchase price until final settlement is made.
47 12. To limit state and federal agencies in their purchase of additional recreational or wildlife
48 habitat until existing sites, other than farmland, are developed and maintained for the
49 purpose for which they were intended.
50 13. That would require governmental agencies to document the impact on agriculture of any
51 infrastructure projects, show whether that impact is justified, and if so take all reasonable
52 steps to reduce or eliminate any negative impact.
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We will oppose:

1. Any effort to establish buffer areas around parks, preserves, or other areas being protected for their environmental or ecological value without just compensation to affected landowners.
2. The formation of any state or federal wildlife refuges, recreational or conservation areas until such time as the boundaries of such projects are clearly defined and the property targeted for acquisition is clearly identified.
3. The creation or expansion of local, state, and federal refuges, recreational or conservation areas when the aggregate acreage of such areas held by all public entities participating in such projects within the county equals more than two percent of the total acreage in the county.
4. The formation of state or national wildlife refuges, recreation, or conservation areas that impede the existing natural and artificial drainage systems of landowners in the watershed.
5. The continued encroachment of federal and state agencies and local governments on agricultural and forest lands.
6. The closing of Illinois State parks and state historic sites since they are valuable assets for the social and economic survival of rural Illinois.

We will seek legislation that clearly defines scenic easements, establishes parameters on the use of such easements, and restricts the ability of the government to use federal highway funds to purchase scenic easements.

We will work with state and federal agencies to allow the farming of lands acquired under the Open Lands Trust or other federal or state grant programs. Applications for Open Lands Trust funds to be used for wetlands or riparian areas must include a mosquito abatement and management plan. The timetable for development of the land acquired through such grant programs shall be established by the unit of local government, but is not to exceed ten years.

We will encourage public universities to utilize more equitable and risk-sharing adjustable rate leases rather than a competitive bidding cash rent lease process on university-owned farmland. All lessees of Illinois farmland controlled by public Illinois universities shall be Illinois based farmers.

When evaluating farm lease policies on farmland owned by the University of Illinois and other public universities, the long term land stewardship commitments, the full potential local effects on rural communities and their economies, and future university relations with possible land donors should be considered in addition to the immediate economic benefits for the universities.

When determining farmland lease policies, the public institutions should consider taking the opportunity to use best management practices on the universities' owned farmland consistent with the information being provided through the University of Illinois Extension Service.

47. HERITAGE AREAS AND CORRIDORS

We oppose heritage areas and corridors, heritage rivers, scenic byways, and any other such federal or state programs that:

1. Have regulatory authority.
2. Have the power of eminent domain.
3. Are involuntary.
4. Are not grassroots, consensus-based programs that actively involve agricultural interests in their creation, development, and execution.

- 1 5. Do not provide a means for a private property owner, a county, or other state or municipal
2 authority to opt out of the program.
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6 48. LAND USE AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION

7 Municipal Annexation

8 We will:

- 9
10 1. Support legislation requiring notification of landowners by the petitioners via certified mail
11 at least 90 days prior to any formal petition to incorporate their land into a municipality as
12 defined in Illinois Statutes.
13 2. Discourage strip and excessive annexation by municipalities.
14 3. Oppose non-contiguous annexation agreements and the ability of municipalities to apply
15 their ordinances to parcels that have not been annexed.
16 4. Support legislation that allows only the landowners in a territory being considered for
17 annexation to be allowed to sign and submit a written petition to the corporate authorities.
18

19 Whenever the governing body of any municipality has adopted a resolution to annex any
20 unincorporated area of land, such municipality shall, before proceeding, present at a public
21 hearing the following information:

- 22 1. A map and description of the area to be annexed.
23 2. Evidence that such annexation is reasonable and necessary to the proper development of
24 the municipality.
25 3. Evidence of the ability to furnish normal municipal services to the unincorporated area at
26 the time of annexation.
27 4. Efforts to reduce the impacts of municipal annexation on agriculture by reducing to
28 10 acres the size of the parcel that may be forcibly annexed and/or establishing a fixed
29 minimum period of time during which agricultural practices may continue.
30

31 Farmland Preservation

32 While protecting the constitutional rights of landowners, we will:

- 33 1. Support efforts to encourage preservation of appropriate lands for agriculture and open
34 space uses through land use programs which include:
35 A. A policy statement by all counties to:
36 (1) Preserve Class I and II farmland as defined by the Natural Resources
37 Conservation Service.
38 (2) Conserve Class III and IV farmland.
39 (3) Protect all classes of farmland from indiscriminate conversion to non-farm
40 use.
41 B. Establishment of a review process with local involvement prior to acquisition of real
42 property by public agencies for public uses.
43 C. Identification of the various classes of farmland in all counties.
44 D. Identification of land in each county appropriate for development because of class,
45 size or location.
46 E. The concept of agricultural areas as found in the Illinois Agricultural Areas
47 Conservation and Protection Act. We will take a strong leadership role in
48 strengthening the Act to ensure that it becomes an effective farmland preservation
49 tool.
50 2. Require consideration of the impact on agriculture and the local tax base and the desires
51 of local voters in proposals to take agricultural lands for any public use.
52 3. Encourage counties and municipalities to implement boundary and land use agreements
53 that protect farmland. Boundary agreements should not be used as a tool in lieu of the
54 purchase of development rights.
55

- 1 4. Seek legislation that limits the term of county/municipal boundary agreements to five years
- 2 in length and subjects such agreements to public notice and public hearing.
- 3 5. Maintain involvement in reviewing federal, state and local proposals to convert farmland to
- 4 non-farm purposes.
- 5 6. Monitor actions by state agencies regarding implementation of the Farmland Protection
- 6 Act.
- 7 7. Work with major urban interests to develop policies and programs which will encourage
- 8 compact cities and discourage conversion of farmland. We support the concept of cluster
- 9 development if the remaining property in the original parcel of property will be preserved
- 10 for agricultural or conservation purposes.
- 11 8. Support the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, whether permanent or
- 12 definitive, for the preservation of farmland for agricultural purposes by local, state, and
- 13 federal agencies. Further, we will seek enabling legislation for counties and municipalities
- 14 to establish local Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) programs to
- 15 purchase agricultural conservation easements in order to preserve farmland.
- 16 9. Cooperate with other organizations on farmland preservation issues.
- 17 10. Oppose the use of condemnation by governmental bodies to acquire farmland for
- 18 farmland preservation.
- 19 11. Support the transfer of development rights to limit farmland conversion.
- 20 12. Encourage municipalities to explore all possible avenues to redevelop areas within their
- 21 borders before annexing farmland.
- 22 13. Support the consideration of impacts on farmland in the development of Environmental
- 23 Impact Statements as being as significant as the impacts to other environmentally
- 24 sensitive areas (i.e., historical sites, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and publicly owned parks
- 25 and recreational areas). We will work with state and federal agencies to develop an
- 26 Environmental Impact Statement methodology that increases the contributory value of
- 27 farmland to the public good.
- 28 14. Support legislation authorizing a graduated conversion fee program for agricultural land
- 29 that is converted to non-agricultural use based on the parcel's Land Evaluation score.
- 30 The collected fees would support local PACE programs.
- 31

32 The federal government should assist in funding the purchase of agricultural conservation
 33 easements for agricultural purposes **from willing sellers** as a means of preserving farmland
 34 without intruding on private property rights. Information about federal, state, local, and private
 35 efforts to acquire private property using tax money should be catalogued and publicized through
 36 a state-level clearinghouse.

37 38 **Zoning & Planning**

39 We will support efforts to:

- 40 1. Require members of a county zoning Board of Appeals to reside within the area covered
- 41 by the county zoning ordinance.
- 42 2. Make it mandatory that County Boards require zoning Boards of Appeal to read and
- 43 include the report of the Soil and Water Conservation District concerning all zoning
- 44 applications in the hearing and in the report on the application which is made to the
- 45 County Board.
- 46 3. Base the extent of the municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and zoning capability
- 47 outside its boundaries on the population of the municipality. The smaller the municipality,
- 48 the smaller its reach of ETJ and authority should be. No ETJ and municipality's zoning
- 49 authority should extend beyond 1 1/2 miles.
- 50 4. Limit the ETJ and zoning capabilities of a municipality to either a municipality's utility
- 51 boundary or corporate limits, whichever lies closer to the city core.
- 52 5. Remove the veto power of municipalities over proposed agricultural areas within their
- 53 1 1/2 mile jurisdiction.
- 54 6. Assist counties and municipalities in considering adoption of zoning.
- 55

- 1 7. Assist counties and municipalities in considering the adoption of a comprehensive land
2 use plan.
- 3 8. Encourage zoned counties to design and implement land use and zoning techniques to
4 protect the integrity of agricultural practices including the option of strict agricultural
5 protection zones.
- 6 9. Establish reverse setbacks, comparable to those in the Livestock Management Facilities
7 Act, for new rural residences built near established livestock facilities.
- 8 10. Ensure local land use administrators have the resources necessary to properly develop
9 and implement land use plans which accommodate production agriculture and ensure the
10 effective and efficient administration of the plan.
- 11 11. Incorporate the use of a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system in
12 evaluating the suitability of land for agriculture/development.
- 13 12. Incorporate the principles of the Land Use Evolution and Impact Assessment Model
14 (LEAM) and encourage its use in planning efforts.
- 15 13. Develop legislation giving counties protest rights over municipal zoning and planning
16 proposals within the unincorporated area of a county, thus requiring a municipality to have
17 a supermajority vote.
- 18 14. Require municipalities to have at least one voting representative from the 1 1/2 mile
19 extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) on their planning commission with the possibility of
20 additional representatives from the ETJ based on the population of the municipality.

21
22 We will:

- 23 1. Maintain active involvement in county planning and zoning and in the establishment of
24 agricultural areas as tools to guide development and limit farmland conversion.
- 25 2. Encourage the State of Illinois to develop a statewide zoning model that can be used by
26 county boards and municipal corporate authorities in adopting and amending zoning
27 ordinances that accommodate agriculture and agricultural tourism. Such a model should
28 account for current agricultural-related federal and state laws and regulations.
- 29 3. Support the provisions of the Local Legacy Act and the Local Planning Technical
30 Assistance Act and work to secure state funding for them by reallocations within the
31 Department of Commerce and Economic Development.
- 32 4. Support legislation that would exempt agriculture from zoning imposed by municipalities
33 within the extraterritorial area outside municipal boundaries.
- 34 5. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to develop relationships with local zoning boards to
35 allow an exchange of information on proposed zoning changes that will impact agriculture
36 on the county level.
- 37 6. Seek legislation requiring 30 days advanced written notification of all landowners and
38 governmental entities whose property or district boundary is within 1 1/2 miles of any
39 parcel in an unincorporated area for which a zoning change is proposed or on which a
40 special use permit is sought. If a petition of protest from 20 percent of those landowners
41 or a written notice from that governing board opposing the change or permit is presented,
42 the amendment shall not be passed nor the special permit issued except by the favorable
43 vote of 3/4 of all the members of the county board. Landowners also need to be given 30
44 days written advance notice of any new or proposed changes to municipal future planning
45 area or land use.
- 46 7. Seek legislation that strengthens the Illinois Counties Code to limit the arranging of “by-
47 right” lots between a proposed rural subdivision and neighboring property owners in a
48 manner intended to extinguish the neighbors’ protest rights.
- 49 8. Encourage townships with planning commissions to have township government approved
50 land use plans or goals with corresponding policies that reflect a consensus of the
51 townships’ residents. These plans, goals, and policies should be used as a basis for
52 recommendations to the county board.

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1 **Other**

2 We will:

- 3 1. Work with units of local government to enact "Right to Farm" ordinances or resolutions.
- 4 2. Support efforts to disclose to potential buyers of rural residential property those conditions
5 associated with living in an agricultural or rural area. These efforts should include state
6 legislation linking such notice to the Residential Real Property Disclosure Act.
- 7 3. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to distribute The Code of Country Living to potential new
8 residents of rural areas so that they better understand rural living.
- 9 4. Seek changes in the process of development of Greenway Plans or other related Illinois
10 Department of Natural Resources plans.
 - 11 A. Where proposed passive or active greenways are targeted, the landowners should
12 have direct input on the creation of the plan.
 - 13 B. Before their county board votes on a plan, the board should be given sufficient time
14 to study the plan and get input from citizens of the county.
 - 15 C. If a county board has approved a plan, there should be the option the county can
16 withdraw from the plan in the future.
 - 17 D. If a plan is developed, it should include provisions to ensure that greenways remain
18 voluntary.

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21 **49. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

22 We believe in the sanctity of private property and individual rights as provided by the U.S.
23 Constitution, as the basis of American freedom and progress. Private property should be defined
24 to include all land, timber or other valuable considerations associated with land ownership. We
25 will oppose legislation allowing the public access to private property without the consent of the
26 property owner.
27

28 We will develop and seek legislation defining how private property rights are impacted by
29 governmental regulations and takings. Such legislation should provide for compensation to
30 affected property owners for a total or reasonably measurable partial loss of use of property
31 resulting from governmental regulations and takings including expanded setback requirements.
32

33 We will oppose any effort to take away or transfer the right of a landowner to grant or deny
34 easements especially on land where easements have previously been given for other purposes.

35 We support and encourage:

- 36 1. Efforts to educate farmers about the utilization and impacts of Global Positioning
37 Systems/Geographic Information Systems (GPS/GIS).
- 38 2. The development of uniform ownership standards for the collection, use, and release of
39 GPS/GIS data and other forms of data so that it becomes the private property of the
40 person who paid for it.
- 41 3. The standardization of formats and protocols developed and used by industry for
42 GPS/GIS applications.
- 43 4. Research to determine the appropriate role of government in the implementation of
44 GPS/GIS systems.
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46 We will support efforts to assist landowners when the rightful ownership of land is questioned by
47 an organized group outside the control of the state in which the land was originally deeded. This
48 assistance should include legal and financial assistance from the State of Illinois.
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1 **50. AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES**

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3 We will:

- 4 1. Support voluntary participation in cooperative marketing to better serve Illinois Agricultural
5 Association and county Farm Bureau members, study and develop successful marketing
6 programs consistent with good business practices and encourage affiliates to follow these
7 guidelines.
- 8 2. Encourage and assist cooperatives to expand member information and involvement
9 programs.
- 10 3. Encourage all agricultural cooperatives to have an aggressive revolving stock redemption
11 policy.
- 12 4. Evaluate processing or further integration into the marketing of farm products as a means
13 of increasing members' income.
- 14 5. Encourage co-ops to play a larger role in the meat industry by building or acquiring
15 packing house/processing cooperatives.
- 16 6. Encourage cooperatives to resist entry into production agriculture that would directly
17 compete with cooperative farmers.
- 18 7. Encourage farmers, when direct competition in production agriculture is involved, to
19 resolve disputes through their cooperative boards (including discontinuation of enterprises
20 that compete with the individual stockholder). In the event voluntary efforts are
21 unsuccessful to provide resolution to these competitive issues, we will seek avenues to
22 equitably resolve disputes between cooperatives and their shareholders/members when
23 the issue is whether the cooperative is directly competing with any shareholder/member in
24 production agriculture activities. Such avenues may include arbitration or mediation.
- 25 A. The following competition guidelines should be addressed:
- 26 (1) Competition could exist between a cooperative and its members if:
- 27 a) A cooperative purchases or rents ground for the sole purpose of
28 producing agricultural commodities.
- 29 b) A cooperative engages in custom farming service.
- 30 c) A cooperative owns livestock or grows out livestock owned by others.
- 31 (2) If a cooperative member decides to enter a venture in competition with the
32 cooperative he/she does not have cause to find fault if the cooperative was
33 already engaged in that activity.
- 34 (3) Competitive production activities should not include seed sales, grain
35 trucking, the application of plant health products such as fertilizer, lime and
36 crop protection products (e.g. pesticides).
- 37 B. The following guidelines of remedy should be considered:
- 38 (1) Member must make a written request to the cooperative that it cease
39 production activity.
- 40 (2) The cooperative shall have a specific period of time to resolve the dispute.
- 41 (3) If the dispute cannot be resolved with the cooperative board, the member
42 may seek to be released from the cooperative. Upon release, the member
43 shall receive the retained earnings allocated plus any outstanding stock,
44 patronage or otherwise, which is held by the member seeking release.
45 The only earnings considered are those on the books of the cooperative
46 that are specifically credited to the account of the named member/patron.
- 47 (4) The cooperative may refuse services to released members and/or require
48 them to reinvest to obtain future services.
- 49 (5) Provisions should be made to allow members to legally waive their rights of
50 redemption and release.
- 51 8. Promote ongoing personal contact between state and county Farm Bureaus and local
52 cooperatives to raise issues and to resolve problems.
- 53 9. Support a federated cooperative structure whereby the regional cooperative continues to
54 assist local cooperatives in serving their farmer members.
- 55

51. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

We support:

1. The meaningful involvement of food and agriculture stakeholders in priority setting, funding, and accountability for federal and state food and agricultural research, extension, and education programs.
2. Determining the need and financing necessary to provide appropriate incentives for building and maintaining a critical mass of well-trained scientists in the public sector to support and ensure that the U.S. remains the leader in global agricultural production.
3. A national Council for Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR) to provide a national emphasis on food and ag research.
4. Increasing the research funding efforts of Illinois' C-FAR.
5. Redesigning the system of research farms and other pilot scale research facilities to assure that new information and technologies generated in public and/or private efforts around the world are rapidly selected for and adapted to Illinois conditions.
6. Awarding some federal special grants on a competitive basis that address high-priority objectives identified by stakeholders and requiring large-scale, well-coordinated efforts by federal and state institutions and agencies working in cooperation with food and agriculture organizations and firms.
7. Annual increases in the federal investment in public food and agriculture research, extension, and education programs to adjust for inflation in costs.
8. The federal investment in research that provides a mix of formula, competitive, and special grants.
9. Continued federal funds for Cooperative State Research, Extension and Education Service (CSREES) programs which should support and be limited to the broad scope of research, extension, and education programs that reflect activities in the U.S. food and agriculture sector. Research, extension, and education programs should be tailored to the unique situations of regions, states, and locales. We support the use of both federal and state funds to support basic, developmental, and adaptive research and technology transfer.
10. Allocation of funds based upon scholarship and quality of science in determining who should receive funds to carry out federal, state, and local research, extension, and education programs.
11. A major personnel building effort in Illinois to restore and improve its public institutional capacity for food and agriculture research, extension, and education.
12. A major capital program in Illinois to provide modern facilities and equipment for its food and agriculture research, extension, and teaching programs.
13. The integration of research, extension, and education programs to ensure an effective and efficient transfer of knowledge and technology to farmers.
14. Increased funding for the Food Genome Project currently administered by the National Science Foundation.
15. Reauthorization of the competitive research facilities program for land grant universities authorized in the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act.
16. Maintaining viable, competitive regional agriculture research centers.
17. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service in its efforts to obtain funding to construct new, biologically-secure, animal disease laboratories for the National Veterinary Services Laboratory, Center for Disease Control, and Veterinary Biological Center.
18. Securing foreign investment in U.S. agriculture research where foreign countries stand to benefit from the outcomes derived from such research.
19. Programs to educate consumers about the necessity of research and its integral position in the creation of a long-term, competitive, desirable agricultural growth industry.
20. Land grant colleges keeping research facilities in the public sector.

21. Programs like the Thomas Jefferson Initiative for Crop Diversification and we will encourage efforts to obtain annual federal funding.
22. An increase of research dollars in the public and private sector dedicated to the development of new domestic uses of agricultural products and commodities.
23. Production research on efficient nutrient uptake, water usage, and improved pest and disease resistance for crops and livestock.

52. AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

We recognize that agricultural tourism educates our urban neighbors about where and how food and farm products are produced.

We will:

1. Recognize agricultural tourism as an economic development tool for rural areas and support public policy that encourages the growth of agricultural tourism.
2. Continue to build a working relationship between agricultural tourism operations, state agencies, and other associations including Agricultural Tourism Partners of Illinois (ATPI).
3. Encourage the development and implementation of a statewide strategic plan for agricultural tourism with industry input and support.
4. Promote collaborative projects to raise the awareness of the importance of agricultural tourism to the state's economy and expand growth opportunities in agricultural tourism for Illinois farms including maintenance of appropriate existing databases and websites.
5. Encourage the insurance industry to offer insurance policies for agricultural tourism farms that provide farm owners with coverage for nuisance lawsuits, property damage, and liability, including liability for injuries to visitors invited to the farm.

53. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

We will aggressively work to encourage growth and enhancement of the livestock industry in Illinois.

We will:

1. Encourage the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to cease interpretation of cases or specific situations as "inherent in the law" when no documented or otherwise noted explanation can be found in the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) (especially with using this language to explain that any expansion leads to the requirement of construction of a storage facility).
2. Encourage all agencies involved with livestock facilities management jurisdiction to interact and cooperate so as to develop greater consistency, uniformity, and practicality in rules and regulations.
3. Support care of livestock through accepted management practices which will provide for better health and safety for the livestock while maintaining acceptable production levels.
4. Support the research and development of approved alternatives to livestock rendering including incineration, composting systems, and approved burial methods.
5. Encourage farmer participation and adoption of quality assurance programs.
6. Strive to educate the general public and the food industry concerning livestock handling procedures which complement accepted livestock management practices, and we will be involved in the development of any standards.
7. Oppose federal, state, or local legislation and regulations that are promoted in the name of "humane" treatment in situations where science shows those regulations would, in actual

- 1 practice, adversely affect the health, longevity, or productivity of livestock and the
2 economic viability of the operation.
- 3 8. Support the Illinois Department of Agriculture being the entity which shall administer the
4 laws and regulations regarding the care of livestock and companion animals.
- 5 9. Work with American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) to initiate a coalition of the entire
6 supply chain from production, to processing, to retail which could develop strategies,
7 action steps, and a plan of work that would address issues affecting the future viability of
8 the livestock industry in a proactive manner.
- 9 10. Support the creation of a poster notifying employees that the use of audio, photographic,
10 and video devices of any kind are prohibited in the workplace. Educational programs on
11 employee-employer relationships and issues should be offered to members.
- 12 11. Establish a more aggressive and visible role in monitoring animal activists' activities, such
13 as identifying sources of funding, legislative initiatives, and membership enrollment. We
14 will work with these groups as needed to ensure complete and accurate public statements
15 about animal agriculture.
- 16 12. Encourage the Council for Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR) to implement the
17 concepts of the David A. Wirsing Food Animal Institute Act to review and disseminate
18 unbiased information about all aspects of the Illinois food animal industry.
- 19 13. Aggressively counter efforts against the livestock industry by continuing to develop a
20 public relations and public information strategy in cooperation with other agricultural
21 interests to provide accurate information to the media concerning animal agriculture.
- 22 14. Support vigorous enforcement of the laws which protect animal production and continue to
23 support criminal penalties for trespassing and damage that disrupts livestock production
24 and/or research facilities.
- 25 15. Provide information in conjunction with the county Farm Bureaus to the media and the
26 public about the importance of the livestock industry. Assistance should also be provided
27 to individual farmers to help them to deal with the public relations challenges faced by
28 the livestock industry.
- 29 16. Encourage livestock exhibitors to only use practices based on responsible animal
30 husbandry. Livestock exhibitors should continue to be educated with regard to what
31 constitutes responsible, ethical, and accepted animal welfare practices, as they relate to
32 the competitive exhibition of livestock.
- 33 17. Encourage livestock show officials to enforce the "Code of Ethics" and penalize violators
34 appropriately.
- 35 18. Seek amendments to the Humane Care for Animals Act and the Illinois Administrative
36 Code that limit the authority of approved volunteer animal investigators that are contracted
37 through the county Humane Societies, to companion animals only, and make those
38 investigators primarily responsible to the Illinois Department of Agriculture.
- 39 19. Support legislation which would prohibit the filing of a nuisance lawsuit until after a newly-
40 constructed livestock operation has been populated and is operating.

41 42 43 44 **54. ANIMAL HEALTH AND IDENTIFICATION**

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46 We will:

- 47 1. Continue to support brucellosis, tuberculosis, and pseudorabies eradication programs for
48 livestock, and research designed to develop and utilize swift and accurate tests to
49 diagnose these diseases.
- 50 2. Support the quarantine of animals from herds known to be infected with reportable
51 diseases and the destruction of animals which are infected with zoonoses which may
52 enter the human food chain.
- 53 3. Support indemnities paid to farmers that are structured so farmers receive full market
54 value for their livestock.
- 55

- 1 4. Support Department of Agriculture assistance for farmers with infected herds to develop
2 an approved plan to clean up or depopulate their herds within a reasonable period of time.
- 3 5. Support federal legislation, regulations or programs which will:
 - 4 A. Support changes in indemnity laws to pay farmers for livestock losses which
5 result from rabies, regardless of the source of the infection.
 - 6 B. Encourage greater uniformity and reciprocity among states for the health
7 requirements necessary for interstate transportation of livestock.
 - 8 C. Develop, at the state and federal levels, an eradication program with indemnities
9 for Johnes Disease.
 - 10 D. Encourage beef, dairy, goat, sheep, and cervid farmers to test their animals for
11 *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*. Farmers should take advantage of educational
12 opportunities, implement sound management practices, and work with their
13 veterinarian to prevent Johne's Disease from being introduced into their herds.
 - 14 E. Develop and identify a swift and accurate live animal diagnostic test for scrapie and
15 develop an eradication program for scrapie in sheep.
 - 16 F. Encourage cooperation between livestock farmers and the Animal and Plant Health
17 Inspection Service in identifying animals from herds originating from nations which
18 have confirmed cases of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).
 - 19 G. Support regionalization by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to
20 modernize animal movement regulations.
 - 21 H. Develop and identify a swift and accurate live animal diagnostic test for Chronic
22 Wasting Disease (CWD) and support an eradication program.
 - 23 I. Support the establishment of a fund within United States Department of Agriculture
24 (USDA) which would pay beef and dairy farmers to voluntarily submit the heads
25 of "fallen stock" on the farm for the purpose of increased BSE surveillance.
 - 26 J. Allow farmer/owner consumption of fallen stock.
 - 27 K. Allow slaughter of injured stock at either a federal inspected packing house or a
28 state inspected local slaughter plant to be used for human consumption.
- 29 6. Support a voluntary premises registration, animal identification, and animal tracing
30 program that:
 - 31 A. Allows USDA and states to access necessary data in the event of an animal health
32 emergency or natural disaster.
 - 33 B. Requires confidentiality for the farmers and equine owners.
 - 34 C. Provides federal funding for a standardization of this system.
 - 35 D. Is cost-effective and not economically burdensome to farmers.
 - 36 E. Enhances confidence in U.S. products in our export and domestic markets.
- 37 7. Support regulations which would prohibit the feeding of pet food and poultry litter to
38 ruminants.
- 39 8. Encourage the Illinois Department of Agriculture to appoint a food animal practitioner to
40 the position of Illinois State Veterinarian.
- 41 9. Encourage USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to make any
42 announcements related to BSE testing after the markets have closed.
- 43 10. Encourage the use of electronic animal health papers with the ability to include actual
44 digital photos of the animal for relevant species.
- 45 11. Support efforts to maintain a modern, biosecure animal base research center.

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55. APICULTURE

We support and encourage legislation or administrative rules for Illinois beekeepers, regarding the harvesting and marketing of honey, that are no more stringent than those of neighboring states.

56. BIOSECURITY

We support:

1. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) placing agricultural screening and inspections as a high priority with its Customs and Border Patrol officers.
2. State and federal legislation to establish an indemnity program and contract relief when acts of terrorism result in production losses or the loss of marketability of agricultural products.
3. Import and export protocols that prevent the introduction of foreign animal and plant diseases.
4. The concept of looking at animal health issues beyond our own borders and examining them as "North American" issues.
5. Educational programs for farmers that will assist them in the early identification, treatment, and required reporting of animal and plant diseases.
6. The testing and development of crops that are resistant to diseases not currently present in the United States. The research should be conducted in non-sensitive areas so that the spread of diseases would not cause any loss of value to U.S. agricultural production.
7. Continuing to work with state agencies such as the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Public Health, and Illinois Department of Agriculture to establish and implement uniform biosecurity protocol for all personnel to follow that is consistent with scientific biosecurity guidelines.

57. BIOTECHNOLOGY

We support:

1. Increased efforts through biotechnology to more rapidly develop traits which have recognized consumer benefits in order to:
 - A. Increase the marketability of our products.
 - B. Enhance the environment.
 - C. Increase net farm income.
 - D. Improve product quality.
 - E. Enhance U.S. agriculture's competitiveness in the world market.
 - F. Ensure worldwide consumers of stable, ample, safe, and nutritious U.S. products.
2. The coordinated analysis of biotechnology products by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they are approved for domestic use and commercialization.
3. Utilizing science, including unbiased research such as feeding trials, on the development and use of biotechnology enhanced products.
4. Ongoing monitoring of the process of biotechnology product research and approval.
5. Increased efforts to educate the public worldwide regarding the safety and benefits of products developed through biotechnology.

- 1 6. Maintenance of U.S. export markets by securing foreign regulatory acceptance of
2 biotechnology products, including the following priorities:
- 3 A. Manufacturers of biotechnology enhanced products must assume major
4 responsibility for this acceptance.
- 5 B. Companies offering biotechnology enhanced products for commercialization in the
6 U.S. must first have approval for most major uses and markets, domestic and
7 international.
- 8 C. Companies must provide adequate and accurate information on acceptable
9 markets and market restrictions in writing to farmers prior to purchase of the
10 original input product.
- 11 D. An ongoing, written reporting system should be maintained for informing farmers
12 what markets do not accept or might be adversely affected by currently
13 unapproved varieties.
- 14 E. Responsible production, marketing, and delivery of agricultural products by those
15 growing varieties not approved for all major uses in all major markets.
- 16 7. Global commercialization and production of biotechnology-enhanced crops provided that
17 U.S. farmers are not disadvantaged by business practices compared to our foreign
18 competitors, and continued monitoring and reporting of biotechnology fees in the U.S. and
19 other countries.
- 20 8. Seed tags on packages of agricultural seed stock that clearly indicate the varietal (and
21 genetic) purity of seed contained therein. We will also support legislation which allows
22 farmers to recover all damages in those instances where the seed does not conform to the
23 genetic purity indicated on the seed tag.
- 24 9. An industry-wide effort to standardize colors for seed treatments (glyphosate tolerance, Bt,
25 rootworm control, etc.) to enhance the effectiveness of farmer and industry stewardship of
26 an ever-increasing number of biotech seed traits.
- 27 10. New or enhanced marketing methods for biotech and non-biotech seeds provided that
28 they do not restrict market options and offer farmers:
- 29 A. Improved cropping options.
- 30 B. More cost-effective inputs.
- 31 C. Better transportation, handling, planting, and yields.
- 32 D. Uniformity in unit size (seed count per unit).
- 33 11. Efforts to establish specific standards for biotechnology enhanced and non-biotechnology
34 enhanced product certifications.
- 35 12. Adequate testing methods for all commercialized crops in order to protect farmers from
36 liability and ensure the integrity of our grain supply, moreover:
- 37 A. Tests should keep pace with the latest technology and product introductions.
- 38 B. Sufficient competition should exist in the testing market to ensure cost-
39 effectiveness.
- 40 C. Tests should be accurate, verifiable, and acceptable to end users.
- 41 D. The first-purchaser should be responsible for testing upon taking delivery.
- 42 E. The cost of testing should be shared along the agri-food chain.
- 43 13. Harmonization of international standards for biotech and non-biotech content, testing,
44 adventitious presence, etc. via the World Trade Organization and Codex Alimentarius.
- 45 14. Strict adherence to contracts and sales agreements covering the production, marketing,
46 and use of biotechnology products.
- 47 15. The strict enforcement of 100 percent quarantine for the research, production, and
48 processing of pharmaceutical and industrial crops that are not approved for food and feed
49 use in the United States in order to protect the commercial grain industry and food safety.
- 50 16. Full compensation to farmers for market losses due to lack of enforcement of 100 percent
51 quarantine on experimental crops.
- 52 17. Biotechnology products that are coming off patent to have:
- 53 A. A product development clause allowing researchers to work with that trait, with proper
54 stewardship restrictions, before the patent expires. This product development clause
55

- 1 should allow for continued product development and the seeking of export market
2 approvals so products can be brought to market as soon as patents expire.
3 B. A system to provide timely access to data collected by the patent holder for the
4 biotechnology regulatory process. The patent holder should receive fair
5 compensation for sharing its data.
6

7 We will actively encourage and educate farmers to be good stewards of biotechnology in order to:

- 8 1. Maintain the integrity of the U.S. food and grain supply.
9 2. Ensure technology remains effective through adherence to regulations (i.e., buffer, refuge,
10 storage, transport, Integrated Pest Management, etc.)
11 3. Preserve opportunities for future biotech products and processes.
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15 **58. COMMODITY CHECKOFFS**

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17 We will:

- 18 1. Support voluntary checkoffs for market promotion, development and research that are
19 collected only once from individuals, marketing agencies or Commodity Credit Corporation
20 (CCC) loans when forfeited and only if the farmer can have his checkoff refunded.
21 2. Support legislated mandatory checkoffs for market promotion, development and research
22 if such checkoffs contain provisions calling for:
23 A. The program to be voted in or out by the farmers affected;
24 B. Control of the program by an independent committee of farmers;
25 C. A full refund of monies upon request to farmers until such time as a refund
26 referendum (not a poll) is approved/disapproved by a majority of farmers voting;
27 D. The monies to be used only for purposes intended;
28 E. The checkoff to apply to all imported products;
29 F. Checkoff-funded research grants for end-user products that have royalty or
30 licensing agreements, where feasible, signed with the research institution.
31 3. Provide information to farmers which supports the need for increased funding of programs
32 designed to expand domestic and foreign markets for commodities and commodity
33 products.
34 4. Encourage the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to provide the farmer proof of payment for
35 checkoff assessments withheld.
36 5. Explore the feasibility of improving farmer participation in checkoffs through the
37 possibility of a mail-in ballot.
38 6. Work with commodity checkoff groups to emphasize value-added benefits to farmers
39 and to focus on higher net returns for farmers.
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43 **59. COMMODITY EXCHANGES**

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45 We support the integrity of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group as a pricing
46 mechanism for commodities.
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48 We will:

- 49 1. Support regulation of the commodity futures business by the Commodity Futures Trading
50 Commission (CFTC).
51 2. Strongly encourage the commodity exchanges to have an active and viable agriculture
52 advisory committee that meets on a regular basis.
53 3. Monitor expanded trading regulations and encourage Illinois Agricultural Association
54 representation on advisory committees to the Commodity Exchanges.
55

4. Oppose new or unnecessary fees being imposed on market price information.
5. Strongly urge the CFTC to minimize price manipulation and ensure the markets are effective as a price discovery mechanism.
6. Review price-setting mechanisms and make recommendations for the most effective price-discovery systems for identity-preserved grains.
7. Strongly encourage the CFTC to work with the CME Group to provide accessibility, usability, and affordability of river terminals, and to increase the number of terminals to be used as delivery points to fulfill hedged grain contracts. This should result in a means to force convergence between the cash and futures market at expiration of the contract.
8. Encourage the CME Group to offer "mini" energy and fertilizer futures contracts to better allow farmers and others to hedge their input costs.

60. COMMODITY GROUPS

We will:

1. Work closely with commodity groups operating in the state and encourage county Farm Bureaus to work closely with local representatives of commodity groups. In addition, we encourage increased cooperation between these commodity groups in Illinois.
2. Continue offering affiliation or contractual relationships to those commodity groups desiring such assistance and services.
3. Schedule and hold a regular meeting or meetings with representatives of commodity groups affiliated or contractually related to Illinois Agricultural Association for purposes of exchanging information and coordinating legislative and regulatory positions and actions.
4. Encourage all commodity groups to pool resources to create and continue a direct concentrated effort to educate consumers on the facts associated with the production of livestock and other agricultural commodities using accepted best management practices.

61. CONTRACT PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

We will:

1. Monitor the current changes in marketing practices for many farm commodities, which are moving from farmer to buyer without entering the open market, but are being produced and marketed by contractual specifications.
2. Strongly encourage the representation of agriculture and assistance in the area of contract marketing. We will support the assignment of staff to research contracts being considered and provide education, information, and advice to attorneys representing farmer members about the ramifications of contracts being entered into and ensure that farmers engaging in contract production and marketing are adequately protected.
3. Aggressively seek measures to ensure that adequate price discovery remains in place for all noncontracted farmers.
4. Support an improved United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity price reporting system based upon required price reporting by first purchasers.
5. Encourage seed and chemical companies to include local elevators in the premium structure, thus making specialty crops available to more farmers.
6. Assist individual member farmers in their efforts to negotiate fair and equitable production contracts by:
 - A. Developing an information clearinghouse and glossary of terms for production contracts.

- 1 B. Working with commodity groups in developing a list of negotiators available for
- 2 individual member farmers to contact in assisting them in negotiating production
- 3 contracts.
- 4 C. Educating farmers about the risks involved with buyers call provisions and ensuring
- 5 that these provisions include:
- 6 (1) Specific delivery periods with negotiated final delivery date.
- 7 (2) Payments to seller if delivery period exceeds original contracted delivery
- 8 period or if buyer "calls" for delivery prior to the contracted delivery period.
- 9 (3) Pricing ability to and beyond delivery.
- 10 D. Supporting measures to promote contract transparency including, but not limited
- 11 to, the establishment of an agricultural contract library within the Illinois Department
- 12 of Agriculture for the public posting of agricultural contracts without releasing the
- 13 identity of the farmer signatory.
- 14 7. Strongly encourage and work to develop contract language that will limit farmer liability
- 15 for grain quality or type to the initial point of delivery.
- 16 8. Encourage companies that contract with farmers to offer them stock purchases or profit
- 17 sharing.
- 18 9. Publicly urge all parties who have entered into commodity marketing agreements to fulfill
- 19 those agreements, despite changes in the prices for the commodity so contracted.
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62. DAIRY MARKETING

We will:

- 26 1. Actively seek input from leaders of the dairy industry and jointly search for solutions to
- 27 dairy problems which are satisfactory to both our organization and the dairy industry. We
- 28 urge the American Farm Bureau Federation to work constructively on a national dairy
- 29 policy that can jointly be supported. Such policy should include a program whereby:
- 30 A. The plan is market oriented, reflect current marketing conditions, and send the
- 31 appropriate signals to dairy farmers to cause adjustments in the production of milk
- 32 components according to market needs. It should allow farmers to look to the
- 33 marketplace for their long-term economic prosperity.
- 34 B. The plan enhances net farm income and ensure an adequate supply of milk.
- 35 C. The plan provides for a worldwide free trade policy.
- 36 D. The plan continues the present purchase based price support program which has
- 37 provided stability to the dairy industry and necessary dairy commodities for
- 38 worthwhile federally authorized food feeding programs.
- 39 E. The use of the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP) is maximized before price
- 40 supports are reduced or inventory management plans are implemented.
- 41 F. The plan does not include dairy quota-type marketing concepts.
- 42 G. The plan does not include state or regional dairy compacts.
- 43 H. The plan supports risk management tools that will protect dairy farmers from
- 44 catastrophic swings in feed and milk prices.
- 45 I. The plan would not place limits on a farmers' growth or production.
- 46 J. The plan encourages development of new products targeted towards the export
- 47 market.
- 48 2. Support changes in milk content standards on a national basis under the Pure Milk
- 49 Ordinances so as not to interfere or obstruct interstate movement of milk.
- 50 3. Support the principle whereby Boards of Directors of dairy cooperatives can vote for their
- 51 members in milk marketing and state promotion plans. However, each farmer, whether or
- 52 not a member of a cooperative, should have the right to cast his own ballot in any
- 53 referendum.
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- 1 4. Support the increased use of dairy products by the school lunch program and by the
2 armed forces.
- 3 5. Work with the dairy industry to coordinate federal and state inspections to eliminate
4 duplication and to continue to allow the shipment of milk between states.
- 5 6. Seek to implement a performance based system that would allow for fewer inspections of
6 dairy farmers that are achieving high ratings from the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- 7 7. Monitor the potential for dairy processor closures or losses of markets and work to inform
8 our membership on alternatives for milk marketing.
9

11 **63. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW USES AND NEW MARKETS**

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14 We will:

- 15 1. Aggressively support efforts to develop innovative uses for and increased consumption of
16 farm commodities and co-products.
- 17 2. Help develop promotional programs for businesses and restaurants that use U.S.-
18 produced commodities in their daily business and support efforts to develop programs
19 which encourage consumption of Illinois-grown farm products.
- 20 3. Support the right of restaurants, without restrictions by local units of government, to
21 market and sell agricultural products and prepared menu choices, provided the product is
22 legally produced using best management practices and industry standards. We support
23 the consumer's right of food choice provided the product is legally produced, marketed,
24 and sold in the United States.
- 25 4. Support efforts to develop and procure financing for processing, distribution, and
26 marketing systems for value-added farm commodities with added emphasis on
27 streamlining and expediting the approval process for farmer-owned projects.
- 28 5. Support efforts to develop new local marketing points for specialty crops.
- 29 6. Cooperate with farmer-invested checkoff groups, organizations, and agencies seeking
30 expanded domestic and export markets, placing special emphasis on value-added
31 products.
- 32 7. Support increased funding of grants and guaranteed loan programs to foster research and
33 development of farm commodity and livestock value-enhanced initiatives. A majority of
34 those funds should be targeted to enable farmers to form farmer-owned processing
35 cooperatives.
- 36 8. Support research on existing and proposed identity-preserved processes in order that
37 government entities may lend their credibility to voluntary industry standards for
38 certification of identity-preserved agricultural products.
- 39 9. Support promoting the use of Illinois-grown produce in Illinois schools and state-funded
40 institutions.
- 41 10. Support a growing sheep wool, goat hair, and other animal fiber (e.g. angora, mohair,
42 alpaca, llama) industry in Illinois and recognize the need for continued promotion and
43 development of value-added processing and marketing.
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47 **64. E-COMMERCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND PERSONAL INFORMATION**

48
49 We will support and encourage the development of electronic commerce (e-commerce)
50 marketplaces and technology.

51
52 We will:

- 53 1. Strive to educate and inform farmers of the opportunities and risks in dealing with e-
54 commerce. Educational efforts should include data security, ownership of data, privacy
55

- 1 and security issues, online membership agreements, online legal contracts, and other
2 legal and regulatory risks.
- 3 2. Assist farmers in selecting e-commerce websites by providing a checklist covering
4 areas of concern when dealing with e-commerce. This will include a farmer-to-farmer
5 transfer of e-commerce experiences and information.
- 6 3. Support activities to develop an alternative dispute resolution system for Internet
7 transactions.
- 8 4. Support legislation that would stop the release of personal information without the consent
9 of the individual. A privacy statement should be supplied stating that the information will
10 not be released without written consent from the individual/patient/customer/client.
- 11 5. Support efforts to prevent the use of electronic personal information for illegal activities
12 such as identity theft and credit fraud.
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16 **65. EQUINE AGRICULTURE**

17
18 We support:

- 19 1. Relationships with entities that would allow establishment, access, and maintenance for
20 equine trail activities on publicly-owned recreational trails.
- 21 2. Education programs to promote a viable and growing equine industry. Such programs
22 may include: responsible ownership, animal husbandry, regulations affecting the equine
23 industry, and disease awareness.
- 24 3. Efforts to provide insurance and liability coverage that is accessible and reasonable for
25 equine owners and participants involved in equine related activities.
- 26 4. Options for end-of-life alternatives for equine including humane harvesting and processing
27 for human consumption, or other uses to produce marketable products, provided all state
28 and federal guidelines are observed.
- 29 5. Continued full funding of federal meat inspectors for equine harvesting facilities.
- 30 6. The expansion and economic welfare of the horse racing industry.
- 31 7. Encouraging equine owners to obtain annual Coggins tests to reduce the spread of Equine
32 Infectious Anemia (EIA), and to consider participating in vaccination regimens for West
33 Nile Virus and rabies.
- 34

35 We oppose closing existing equestrian trails on federal and state property other than property
36 where irreversible damage could occur.

37

38 We will seek legislation allowing equine harvesting in Illinois.

39

40 We will support efforts to develop and execute an Illinois equine census.

41

42 We will seek legislation classifying equine as livestock.

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46 **66. FARMER PROTECTION FOR PAYMENT OF GRAIN**

47
48 We support:

- 49 1. The review of civil and criminal penalties to determine if they are adequate and enforced
50 to the full extent of the law.
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- 1 2. Changes in the U.S. Warehouse Act which would allow any state which has a warehouse
2 law which is more restrictive and more protective than the federal law, to require
3 warehouses operating in the state to comply with the state's provisions rather than the
4 federal statute.
- 5 3. The maintenance of the current state powers of licensing of warehouses and grain
6 dealers, and general regulation of the grain industry, as embodied in the Illinois Grain
7 Code, and oppose federal preemption of state authority.
- 8 4. Informing farmers of the potential risk in selling grain to unlicensed parties and how to
9 identify licensed facilities.
- 10 5. The concept that farmers who buy more than 100,000 bushels of grain on an annual basis
11 from other farmers for use as seed or feed, and use price-later contracts, must provide a
12 bond to the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to guarantee payment for
13 all purchases of grain, except no bond shall be required in those situations where a tenant
14 purchases, from his landlord, grain produced by the tenant.
- 15 6. The requirement of a reminder notification being made by licensee to the farmer no less
16 than 30 days prior to the end of the 365-day period of coverage for price-later contracts.
- 17 7. Continuing educational programs to inform members of potential problems of marketing
18 grain under priced later or deferred price contracts. Farmers should be encouraged to
19 request prompt payment available to them under laws and regulations. Farmers should be
20 informed of the risks and costs involved in selling grain without receiving payment. Danger
21 signals which might help identify grain dealers or warehousemen in financial trouble should
22 also be publicized.
- 23 8. Maintaining the target balance of the Illinois Grain Insurance Fund at a level that is
24 commensurate with the cash value of Illinois grain commodities.

25 26 27 28 **67. GRAIN AND HAY GRADING**

29
30 We support:

- 31 1. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to improve standards for
32 grain which will reflect storability and highest potential use.
- 33 2. Moisture as a measurement of quantity, not quality.
- 34 3. The development and funding of a voluntary certification process for identity-preserved
35 grain.

36
37 We will:

- 38 1. Maintain close liaison with USDA to ensure proposed grade changes are in the best
39 interests of farmers with particular attention to the proper role for grade factors such as
40 test weight, foreign material, and other quality factors such as breakability.
 - 41 2. Actively seek potential board members for the GIPSA Grain Inspection Advisory
42 Committee and work with the American Farm Bureau Federation to increase farmer
43 representation on the advisory committee.
 - 44 3. Encourage an effective grain discount schedule that is determined at the time of contract
45 instead of at the time of delivery.
 - 46 4. Work with the USDA, private agencies and the State Department of Agriculture to develop
47 and adopt more accurate equipment and procedures for testing moisture percentage and
48 test weights in grain.
 - 49 5. Encourage the State of Illinois and USDA to continue testing, developing grading
50 standards, and identifying various qualities of hay and grain.
 - 51 6. Support changes in grain grading standards to compensate farmers for high quality
52 products.
 - 53 7. Support research that identifies the advantages and disadvantages of selling grain on a
54 value-based or component-pricing basis.
- 55

- 1 8. Support efforts to maintain grain quality in transit.
- 2 9. Support efforts to standardize and certify local elevators' aflatoxin testing equipment and
- 3 operators and accept their test results for federal crop insurance loss payments.
- 4 10. Support changes to have processors and elevators show documented economic
- 5 justification for all discount rates concerning grain quality degradation, i.e., test weight, off-
- 6 color, odor, or moisture.
- 7 11. Encourage dialogue throughout the grain industry to use moisture discount schedules
- 8 based on one-tenth increments of actual moisture recorded over the allowable moisture
- 9 content, instead of rounding up to the nearest one-half point.

12 **68. INDUSTRIAL HEMP PRODUCTION**

13 We encourage research of market potential for the production and processing of industrial hemp.
14 We will aggressively pursue actions necessary to allow research on the production of industrial
15 hemp and require the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to issue permits to U.S. farmers
16 allowing the production of this crop.
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22 **69. LIVESTOCK PRICING AND MARKETING**

23 We will:

- 24 1. Actively seek appropriate changes to mandatory price reporting which should include
- 25 wholesale meat price reporting for the pork industry.
- 26 2. Support legislation, on a state and national basis, establishing the Grain Inspection
- 27 Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) as the overall authority and provider of
- 28 oversight to ensure livestock contracts are clearly-written, confidentiality concerns are
- 29 addressed, investments are protected, and contractors honor the terms of contracts.
- 30 3. Support providing GIPSA with the authority to enforce contract standards that enhance
- 31 price transparency and price discovery with livestock contracts.
- 32 4. Support the incorporation of monthly slaughter capacity reporting in mandatory price
- 33 reporting by packers.
- 34 5. Work to ensure GIPSA be provided enforcement authority to ensure that all instruments
- 35 used in quantifying quality factors for value determination for livestock are performing to a
- 36 set standard.
- 37 6. Support the inclusion of time and date stamp for reporting prices of livestock.
- 38 7. Encourage United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and industry representatives
- 39 to examine the practicality of an industry wide, uniform grading system for pork that
- 40 includes a quality grade.
- 41 8. Support development and implementation of value-based marketing systems which
- 42 convey the value of product quality from the retail market to the farm.
- 43 9. Encourage farmers to fully understand the risks involved with using but not participating
- 44 in a market to set a price.
- 45 10. Cooperate with and encourage USDA, livestock groups, and university researchers to
- 46 develop and utilize alternative price discovery methods.
- 47 11. Encourage the Illinois Department of Agriculture to seek the most efficient method for sale
- 48 barns to report prices for distribution to farmers.
- 49 12. Work with the CME Group, other industry groups, and livestock packers to develop a
- 50 market mechanism that allows for improved forward pricing contracts and flexible pricing
- 51 opportunities for farmers.
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- 1 13. Encourage the CME Group and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to
2 recognize packing plants as delivery points to fulfill livestock contracts, resulting in means
3 to bring convergence between the cash and futures market at expiration of the contract.
- 4 14. Encourage the Illinois Livestock Development Group to work with livestock packers in
5 order to facilitate the expansion of livestock buying stations in Illinois.
- 6 15. Work with American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and other commodity groups to
7 support all efforts to improve the livestock price reporting system.
- 8 16. Support all reporting system changes that will generate reported market prices calculated
9 on premium prices paid as well as price lows in the quality range.
- 10 17. Promote the concept that livestock packers secure at least 20 percent of their purchases
11 from the cash market.
- 12 18. Support any additional funding from USDA needed to enable GIPSA to conduct these
13 activities.

14
15 If a packer is offering a contract that is based upon a cash market, the packer needs to
16 participate in this market and help set a price.

17
18 It is imperative that GIPSA has the oversight on mandatory price reporting – not Agricultural
19 Marketing Service (AMS).

20 21 22 23 **70. ORGANIC AGRICULTURE**

24
25 The growth of the organic food and product markets provides new income potential for Illinois
26 farmers of all sizes. The integrity of this program and process should be maintained.

27
28 We support:

- 29 1. All methods of agricultural production and marketing provided they offer opportunities to all
30 farmers who qualify or meet required standards.
- 31 2. Efforts to enhance marketing opportunities for producers of organically-grown commodities
32 just as we support such efforts for conventionally-produced crops.
- 33 3. The requirement that all farmers, handlers, and retailers must be certified by a United
34 States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-accredited certifying agent to sell, label, or
35 represent their products as organic.
- 36 4. The current program requirement that organic farmers be responsible for taking
37 appropriate measures (e.g., buffer strips) to protect their crops from pollen drift or other
38 factors affecting the integrity of their crops.
- 39 5. Enhanced auditing and enforcement of the USDA-certified organic program in line with its
40 increasing economic importance and growth.
- 41 6. Broad availability of information on the USDA-certified organic program, certification
42 process, and labeling requirements, as well as other unbiased information on organic
43 products or production.

44 45 46 47 **71. PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ACT**

48
49 We urge:

- 50 1. The Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission, with the support of the
51 Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), to more aggressively
52 enforce current anti-trust laws pertaining to packer mergers, market concentrations,
53 packer feeding, and contracting. Open, competitive markets which include access to
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- 1 slaughter space and the number of contracted slaughter days should be monitored and
- 2 enforced if necessary.
- 3 2. The Department of Justice to watch for a potential monopoly on a regional, rather than a
- 4 national basis.
- 5 3. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) be included in the decision-making
- 6 procedure with respect to proposed mergers and acquisitions of meat packing firms.
- 7 4. Slaughter capacity be added to the USDA's hog reports.

8
9 We will support:

- 10 1. Legislation that grants GIPSA authority to prosecute violators and seek restitution for
- 11 farmers in cases involving agricultural production, processing, and marketing violations.
- 12 2. Incorporation of a dealer trust provision to the Packers and Stockyards Act. The bonding
- 13 requirement for livestock dealers and packers should be reviewed on an annual basis and
- 14 be adjusted to reflect the volume of the maximum financial exposure to farmers and/or
- 15 their brokers and then be made available to the public.

16
17 We will seek changes to the administration of the Illinois Livestock Auction Market Law that will

18 clarify, as well as strengthen, language relating to the use of custodial accounts by livestock

19 auctions.

20
21 We oppose packers owning livestock before slaughter with the exception of farmer-owned closed

22 cooperatives and farmer-owned livestock fed and retail-marketed within the provisions of a

23 specialty product marketing alliance.

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27 **72. PLANT PATENTS AND PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION**

28
29 For decades, the Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA) has played a critical role in the protection,

30 maintenance, and propagation of agricultural seed varieties. While the advent of biotechnology

31 and the applicability of plant and utility patents to plants have complicated the plant protection

32 landscape, PVPA should still play a primary role in the protection and propagation of current and

33 future plant varieties. In order to do that, PVPA must remain relevant and effective.

34
35 We support:

- 36 1. PVPA as the exclusive statute governing the Intellectual Property Rights for the breeders
- 37 of plant varieties.
- 38 2. Maintaining the international and domestic gene/germplasm banks/stores. These should
- 39 remain easily accessible to the public.
- 40 3. Continued plant variety research in the public sector.
- 41 4. Compensation for the public contribution in a joint public-private venture.

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45 **73. RISK MANAGEMENT/CROP INSURANCE**

46
47 We encourage continued farmer education of risk management alternatives, efforts to refine

48 existing risk management tools, and the development of new crop insurance and other risk

49 management tools. The ultimate goal should be to eliminate the need for federal disaster

50 payments for all farmers.

1 Until such improvements in risk management tools are made, and in the event federal disaster
2 payments are approved, we believe:

- 3 1. The federal crop insurance program should be actuarially sound by crop, by county, and
4 by state.
- 5 2. Funding for disaster assistance programs should not come from reopening the farm bill or
6 from other agricultural funding offsets.
- 7 3. Disaster payments should not penalize farmers who have purchased higher levels of
8 crop insurance.
- 9 4. Disaster payments should be in the form of increased levels of coverage for those farmers
10 carrying crop insurance with eligible losses.
- 11 5. Farmers and/or landlords should be able to opt out of crop insurance coverage, but in so
12 doing, would not be eligible for federal disaster payments on crop losses.
- 13 6. Disaster assistance payments should be distributed in as timely a manner as possible.
- 14 7. Farmers should not have to be turned down by a lender to qualify for a low interest disaster
15 loan.
- 16 8. Beginning farmers should be allowed to use county yield estimates instead of the
17 calculated T-yield when establishing yields for federal crop insurance.

18 **Risk Management**

19 We support:

- 20 1. Providing leadership in seeking new ways for farmers to manage risk through the private
21 sector.
- 22 2. The use of pilot programs that would serve to assist farmers in learning to utilize various
23 risk management tools for all products, including livestock. Farmers willing to participate in
24 the pilot program should be allowed to choose from a variety of approved risk
25 management methods designed to substantially manage the risk of the farming operation.
26 The cost of implementing the chosen risk management method should be subsidized
27 during the pilot program.
- 28 3. Education programs that provide risk assessment and risk management as well as
29 professional education for farmers in marketing, financial management, and government
30 regulations.
- 31 4. The use of off-exchange agricultural trade option contracts in commodity marketing, which
32 would include complete risk disclosure, vendor integrity, and with the opportunity for cash
33 settlement of the option. We should provide educational programs for farmers to learn
34 about this risk management tool and work with commodity buyers to offer agricultural
35 trade option contracts.
- 36 5. The necessary legislative and regulatory changes to establish a Farmer Investment
37 Savings Account into which a farmer could contribute pre-tax dollars for self-insurance and
38 be allowed to make withdrawals at the contributor's discretion.

39 **Crop Insurance**

40 We will actively seek a crop insurance program which:

- 41 1. Provides payments for actual losses, including losses incurred from delayed or prevented
42 plantings, arising from natural causes, and impacting a significant number of farmers in
43 a concentrated area.
- 44 2. Requires consistent interpretation and implementation of all federal crop insurance
45 provisions, especially Prevent Plant provisions.
- 46 3. Allows the farmer a selection of coverages insuring for specific perils including the
47 variation of coverages on the same crop.
- 48 4. Provides coverage that is written and losses paid on the basis of dollars per acre rather
49 than based on a guaranteed level of production.
- 50 5. Is offered and administered through private sector resources willing and able to assume
51 some level of risk.
- 52 6. Can be affordably reinsured through the federal government.

- 1 7. Eliminates federally mandated requirements in order to be eligible to participate in the
2 federal farm programs.
- 3 8. Allows the Secretary of Agriculture the right to extend the planting deadline for crop
4 insurance purposes for untimely plantings due to weather delays.
- 5 9. Allows farmers and/or landlords to opt out of crop insurance coverage, but in so doing
6 would not be eligible for federal disaster payments on crop losses.
- 7 10. Requires that the individual county final yield averages needed for Group Risk Income
8 Protection (GRIP) and Group Risk Plan (GRP) policies be released one month prior to the
9 deadline for the crop insurance sales closing date for the federal crop insurance program.
10 This date should be uniform for all regions involved in the program.
- 11 11. Allows individual units to be insured on a Farm Service Agency (FSA) optional unit basis.
- 12 12. Is actuarially sound by crop, by county, and by state.
- 13 13. Serves as a business tool for the farmer that protects against natural and/or economic
14 disasters and is not used as an artificial incentive to produce a crop.
- 15 14. Requires all United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies accepting
16 production data, including acreage and yield data that has been certified, to reconcile the
17 data in order to streamline the reporting process and reduce the potential for fraud and
18 abuse.
- 19 15. Requires the automatic extension of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) acreage
20 reporting deadline in the event the FSA certification deadline is extended. The extension
21 of the deadlines should maintain the existing time period between the deadlines.
- 22 16. Promotes the use of Soil Productivity, derived from existing County Natural Resource
23 Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Surveys, as a guide for establishing base T yields for
24 Federal Crop Insurance.
- 25 17. Expands the USDA Risk Management Agency's (RMA) Adjusted Gross Revenue
26 Insurance pilot program to include Illinois, or to offer the program nationwide.
- 27 18. Allows the use of the higher of either the base price (such as February average for corn
28 and soybeans) of the appropriate futures contract or loan rate for that crop in order to
29 establish the initial revenue guarantee for revenue-based crop insurance policies.
- 30 19. Rebalances premium subsidy levels by applying a flat percentage across all coverage
31 levels.
- 32 20. Explores the feasibility and possibility of offering farmers coverage levels above the
33 currently offered coverage levels.
- 34 21. Studies the elimination of Catastrophic (CAT) coverage and applying those subsidy dollars
35 to higher coverage levels.
- 36 22. Allows high-risk ground to be insured separately, and at a lower level, than other ground in
37 the same county.
- 38 23. Allows Written Agreements, once granted, to remain effective until loss ratios dictate
39 otherwise.
- 40 24. Devotes additional resources to allow annual review of RMA rates for all crops in all
41 states, with priority given to:
 - 42 A. States with loss ratios consistently exceeding the Agricultural Risk Protection Act
43 (ARPA) mandate receiving accelerated degree-of-rate change to achieve actuarial
44 soundness as quickly as possible.
 - 45 B. States with consistently low loss ratios.
 - 46 C. Including non-insured ground in production review in order to receive the most
47 accurate assessment possible of each county's production capacity.
- 48 25. Devotes additional research dollars to improve existing policies to develop new insurance
49 tools and foster the development of new and innovative delivery systems.
- 50 26. Expands the availability of the Revenue Assurance (RA) policy to all currently insurable
51 crops in all states, and:
 - 52 A. Combines features of the Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) policy and RA-Harvest
53 Price Option policy due to their similarities.
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- 1 B. Combines features of the Income Protection (IP) policy and RA-Base Price Option
2 policy due to their similarities.
- 3 C. Creates more distinguished names for the two RA products to prevent confusion.
- 4 27. Promotes the development of federal and private sector revenue-based insurance policies
5 that could be used to provide income protection for specialty crops and livestock normally
6 produced in that area.
- 7 28. Allows double-cropped soybeans to be insured as a separate unit and the lengthening of
8 planting dates to better reflect variety maturity, growing season length, Land Grant
9 University or processor recommendations, geographic areas, and weather conditions.
- 10 29. Allows double-cropped feedgrains to be insured as a separate unit if best management
11 practices are followed.
- 12 30. Allows the use of all elevator quality factors conducted by certified graders using certified
13 testing equipment. These factors include moisture, foreign material, test weight, damage,
14 and mycotoxins. The disinterested third party requirements for mycotoxin testing should
15 be eliminated if certified equipment and testers are in place.
- 16 31. Offers replant benefits that accurately reflect actual cost of replanting the damaged crop.
- 17 32. Allows farmers and landlords to receive replant benefits reflective of their share of the
18 expenses to replant the damaged crop, regardless of the crop insurance company or type
19 of crop insurance policy they or the landlord/tenant have.
- 20 33. Requires RMA claim guidelines to take into consideration economic justification when
21 Best Management Practices are used to determine treatment thresholds and timeliness of
22 applications.
- 23 34. Allows crop insurance agents to be involved in the claims process to provide enhanced
24 and seamless service to farmers.
- 25 35. May allow Actual Production History (APH) calculations to be based on five years of actual
26 yield history.
- 27 36. Collects premiums for spring-planted crops no earlier than October first.
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31 **74. SPECIALTY CROPS**

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33 Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and
34 nursery crops including floriculture.

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36 We will:

- 37 1. Work to enhance the industry's image and recognize the importance of its contribution to
38 the agricultural economy.
- 39 2. Provide programming, legislative, and marketing support for the continued growth and
40 development of various specialty crops that are not already defined as such within the
41 2008 Farm Bill.
- 42 3. Support an indemnification program that provides for losses of plants and nursery stocks
43 that need to be eradicated to control the spread of serious communicable diseases. The
44 program should be funded by state/federal sources and the indemnity payments should be
45 based upon current market values.
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49 **75. TRADE**

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51 We support increased agricultural exports to efficiently utilize the productive resources of
52 American agriculture to enhance farm income and improve the farm economy.

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- 1 We will:
- 2 1. Support trade negotiating authority for the President of the United States in order to
3 achieve:
 - 4 A. A full round of World Trade Organization (WTO) trade negotiations including all
5 industry sectors and giving agriculture a full seat at the table. The overall goal
6 should be to lower both tariff and non-tariff barriers for U.S. exports around the
7 world.
 - 8 B. Binding agreements to resolve sanitary and phytosanitary issues on the basis of
9 scientific principles.
 - 10 C. Tariff equalization and increased market access by requiring U.S. trading partners
11 to eliminate tariff barriers within specified timeframes.
 - 12 D. Changes in international agreements and U.S. law and practices that would
13 facilitate and shorten dispute resolution procedures and processes.
 - 14 E. The use of all existing international agreements under the WTO and U.S.
15 countervailing duty laws to prevent the dumping of subsidized agricultural products.
 - 16 F. Removal of governmental policies, agencies, or rules that inhibit agricultural trade.
 - 17 G. Immediate, unrestricted trade and distribution of U.S. approved agricultural bio-
18 tech products.
 - 19 2. Aggressively seek improved market access and reduced trade barriers through support of
20 the World Trade Organization (WTO), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),
21 the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement (FTAA), and greater flexibility for the
22 Agricultural Trade Ambassador and Secretary of Agriculture to deal with trade issues.
 - 23 3. Support and strengthen trade negotiation efforts and, if appropriate, federal legislation that
24 would address monetary policies that harm U.S. trade.
 - 25 4. Support International Monetary Fund (IMF) efforts provided their actions are based upon
26 sound fiscal and economic policies and further facilitate world trade.
 - 27 5. Initiate an increased emphasis on global currency relationships by:
 - 28 A. Educating our members on their importance to agricultural trade and foreign
29 competition.
 - 30 B. Keeping legislators and others in government aware of their impact on agricultural
31 trade and the farm bill spending.
 - 32 6. Continue to support, and encourage increased funding for, promotion of U.S. agricultural
33 products through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs like Market
34 Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD).
 - 35 7. Seek annual review of the Jones Act with the goal of removing the shipping restrictions
36 that adversely affect agricultural products.
 - 37 8. Seek and support legislation to require Congressional approval of any embargoes of
38 agricultural products proposed by the President.
 - 39 9. Seek to maintain and build the reputation of U.S. agri-food products as the safest in the
40 world in order to improve and enhance marketing and sales worldwide and to ensure
41 consumer confidence. To do that we will support harmonization of domestic food safety
42 and quality standards with our international trading partners based on the guidelines set
43 by the WTO and Codex Alimentarius.
 - 44 10. Seek uniform intellectual property protection standards with all of our trading partners as a
45 precursor to granting U.S. market access or entering into expanded trade agreements. At
46 the same time, we will encourage companies trading in patented products to avoid
47 commerce in those nations which do not respect or enforce those patents.
 - 48 11. Support the development of a program that compensates farmers through market loss
49 payments:
 - 50 A. For competitive disadvantages to U.S. farmers resulting from burdensome
51 domestic regulations or standards that are more strict than those in other countries.
 - 52 B. If currency values harm U.S. farm trade and if it can be achieved within WTO
53 guidelines.
- 54
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12. Support resumption of normal trading relations with Cuba (including elimination of restrictions on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba and simplifications of licensing and shipping requirements for sales to Cuba).
13. Monitor the impact of deregulation on the food and agricultural industry.
14. Support stringent inspections of imports to the U.S. to protect our domestic production capacity and supply of agricultural products from infestations.
15. Actively encourage and pursue opportunities, in conjunction with the American Farm Bureau Federation and other state Farm Bureaus, to improve informational, organizational, and marketing linkages between and among North and South American farmers.
16. Actively encourage the pursuit of opportunities that will support information exchanges with agricultural organizations within countries with rapidly growing economies, such as China and India, specific to the issues of competing energy use and rising input costs.

We oppose:

1. Any U.S. policies that restrict agricultural exports.
2. The subsidization of any direct foreign competition.
3. Use of the Precautionary Principle (when a perceived threat of harm to the environment or human health exists, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically).

We believe the United States should use its agricultural production capacity to enhance food security and economic development; thereby enhancing not only the reputation of the U.S. as a reliable supplier of agricultural products and expertise but also as a leader in fostering economic development globally.

We support:

1. Securing a commitment from the federal government to provide leadership in enhancing global food security and economic development.
2. Increasing federal commitment to food and agricultural assistance programs.
3. Foreign aid in the form of agricultural products and value added agricultural products rather than cash, whenever feasible.
4. Encouraging recipient nations to use or purchase U.S. agricultural goods and services.
5. Giving emergency food relief needs the highest priority in foreign aid programs.

We oppose foreign aid being used by recipient countries to stimulate production or distribution of farm commodities for export that are in surplus in the U.S.

We support PL 480 as an important program that should be continued and assessed in the context of a broader strategy for expanding U.S. food aid with the following priorities:

1. Concentrating on the least developed countries.
2. Focusing on small landholders.
3. Utilizing local staples.
4. Serving local markets.
5. Improving recipient nation regulatory systems to increase food safety and facilitate local and regional trade.

We support federal legislation eliminating cargo preference provisions on PL 480 and other aid programs.

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3 **76. USDA REPORTING AND OPERATIONS**

4 We will:

- 5 1. Support the continuance of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a
6 cabinet level department.
- 7 2. Support the efforts of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Illinois
8 Agricultural Statistics Service, and encourage members to provide their most accurate
9 information when surveyed for crop, livestock and other reports.
- 10 3. Urge the USDA to improve the accuracy and timely release of national and international
11 statistics, and maintain the confidentiality of individual farm reports.
- 12 4. Support legislation to reinstate public access of the Common Land Unit (CLU) data to
13 Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Data Gateway.
- 14 5. Work to improve the accuracy – and the method used by the USDA – in calculating its
15 annual net farm income figure.
- 16 6. Support educational efforts to inform the American consumer that the USDA serves a
17 variety of consumer interests and not just those of the farm population.
- 18 7. Support continued use of locally-elected farmer county committees to administer and
19 oversee USDA farm and agricultural credit programs.
- 20 8. Oppose the expansion of the locally-elected county committees by the addition of
21 appointed committee members.
- 22 9. Support maintaining the NRCS within the USDA.
- 23 10. Encourage USDA to adequately fund, staff, and train local USDA offices to enhance
24 farmer services.
- 25 11. Support maintaining the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) budget at levels no
26 lower than the 2007 budget appropriation.
- 27 12. Support the long-term funding of the USDA's Risk Management Agency.
- 28 13. Support USDA plans to create a new soybean yield estimate model for the September
29 crop report that reflects the significant changes in soybean production models.
- 30 14. Request that USDA include in its monthly livestock reports information indicating the
31 number and origin of imported and destination of exported livestock.
- 32 15. Support USDA efforts to enhance and expand electronic filing of USDA forms and
33 dissemination of information.
- 34 16. Support the upgrade of computer technology and appropriate software to allow the NRCS,
35 Farm Service Agency (FSA), and NASS to utilize and share the same farm program
36 enrollment information, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are
37 utilized.
- 38 17. Support a more thorough review, including local input, of any proposed closure of a local
39 USDA or FSA office before a decision is made.
- 40 18. Urge USDA NASS to regularly report data on the production and use of ethanol
41 co-products used for livestock feed.

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44 **77. CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM**

45 We support:

- 46 1. The continued funding of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through current
47 methods, plus private sources of contributions (e.g. conservation groups, hunting groups,
48 and environmental groups) to remove fragile lands from production.
 - 49 2. Encouragement of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to enroll additional
50 CRP acres to the maximum authorized by Congress.
 - 51 3. Basing the judging criteria for CRP enrollment upon the land's erosion potential as
52 cropland and not on its current erosion status.
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- 1 4. An expansion of the continuous signup CRP acreage to include:
 - 2 A. Filter strips along waterways.
 - 3 B. Greater widths of waterways, filter strips, field borders, and riparian buffers.
 - 4 C. Setbacks at road intersections.
 - 5 D. Crop protection product setbacks around tile inlet structures.
 - 6 E. Up to one acre filter strips around standpipes and other intakes where surface
 - 7 water enters directly into subsurface water.
 - 8 F. Grassed terraces.
 - 9 G. Buffers around villages, timbered areas, irrigation reservoirs, ponds, and
 - 10 stormwater retention basins.
 - 11 H. Expanding the statewide allocations on field borders and upland restoration
 - 12 projects.
 - 13 I. Approving a 20 percent incentive for all projects using native prairie grasses, forbs,
 - 14 shrubs, or trees.
 - 15 J. Allowing enrollment of and acceptance of "infeasible to farm" acres (an area that is
 - 16 too small or isolated to be economically farmed).
 - 17 K. Farms declared not insurable in the crop insurance program because of wildlife
 - 18 crop damage to be eligible to be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.
- 19 5. Legislation which ensures that both tenant and landlord interests will be fairly protected.
- 20 6. Limitations on participation rates so as not to adversely affect local farm land rental rates.
- 21 7. The practice of planting vegetative filter strips along both sides of ditches and waterways
- 22 to improve water quality. Strips of variable widths should be eligible for the CRP.
- 23 8. Programs being made available to give farmers viable economic options to traditional crop
- 24 production following expiration of CRP contracts.
- 25 9. The ability of all drainage district easements to be included in the CRP filter strip program.
- 26 10. Provisions that would allow farmers and landowners to terminate participation in the CRP if
- 27 USDA cannot meet the agreed contractual payment amount within 30 days of its due date
- 28 or is forced by budget constraints to reduce the annual payment amount as set forth in the
- 29 CRP Contract. If the farmer opts out of the CRP all past due monies will be paid with
- 30 accrued interest.
- 31 11. Continuation of CRP on fragile and environmentally sensitive lands formerly enrolled in
- 32 CRP if the CRP is not continued at current levels. Qualified land areas should be
- 33 determined by county Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and the Natural
- 34 Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- 35 12. Encouraging USDA to give adequate credit during CRP sign-ups for areas throughout the
- 36 nation that experience wind erosion on sandy soils.
- 37 13. The broadening of criteria for enrollment or re-enrollment of land in CRP. Examples of the
- 38 criteria include but are not limited to:
 - 39 A. Land with the highest environmental benefits index (EBI).
 - 40 B. Land targeted based on type of CRP cover or conservation practice, with priority
 - 41 given to land in trees, alley cropping, or with special conservation attributes.
 - 42 C. Land targeted based on water quality, air quality, soil quality, and wildlife.
 - 43 D. Land that, if cultivated, would be most damaging to the environment. For example,
 - 44 land that would likely opt out of farm programs and conservation compliance due to
 - 45 high compliance costs.
- 46 14. The elimination of the Erodibility Index as an exclusionary consideration for concentrated
- 47 CRP sign up.
- 48 15. Wildlife habitat improvement, especially on CRP acreage.
- 49 16. The Conservation Reserve Program's State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)
- 50 practice that provides financial incentives to producers.
- 51 17. Recognition in the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that qualifying established cover
- 52 practices on acreages being re-enrolled in the CRP provide certain benefits over
- 53 destroying existing stands to plant preferred species.
- 54
- 55

- 1 18. The evaluation of all CRP property by the county NRCS office staff to ensure that
- 2 previously recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been maintained
- 3 before the property can be re-enrolled in CRP.
- 4 19. Haying and grazing of CRP acres should be permitted at the discretion of the Secretary of
- 5 Agriculture in weather-related or other emergency situations in a timely manner.
- 6 20. Each state Farm Service Agency (FSA) office determining CRP rates and acreage
- 7 qualifications as opposed to the national USDA office.
- 8 21. Increasing the enrollment of filter strips in the CRP and offering incentives for re-
- 9 enrollment.
- 10 22. The continuation and expansion of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- 11 (CREP) with full funding.
- 12

13 We will oppose:

- 14 1. Any effort to allow the public to automatically use or have access to private property that is
- 15 enrolled in CRP.
- 16 2. Further changes in CRP which would allow conservation acreage to be brought back into
- 17 permanent production before the ten-year contract expires.
- 18 3. The use of CRP land for biomass fuel production without a corresponding reduction in
- 19 CRP payments.
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23 78. FARM CREDIT

24

25 We will:

- 26 1. Work to maintain the availability of adequate sources of credit for all agricultural interests.
- 27 2. Encourage all agricultural lenders to publicize their rates and loan policies.
- 28 3. Support Farm Service Agency (FSA) assistance to those borrowers who cannot obtain
- 29 credit otherwise.
- 30 4. Support the continued graduation of FSA borrowers who exhibit the ability to obtain credit
- 31 from conventional sources and continue to work with FSA in developing improved and
- 32 flexible programs with more effective use of FSA funds.
- 33 5. Support the FSA in providing adequate levels and terms of credit in a constructive and
- 34 responsible manner.
- 35 6. Review and recommend appropriate FSA agency policy on loan term limits, loan size
- 36 limits, and interest rate subsidies.
- 37 7. Require that FSA loans be secured by adequate collateral and reasonable repayment
- 38 capacity.
- 39 8. Promote the use of past business performance, when available, as a strong indicator of
- 40 future performance when considering approval of an FSA loan for a farmer.
- 41 9. Support educational programs for members and agricultural lenders on financial
- 42 management and marketing programs.
- 43 10. Urge all lenders to cooperate with federal and state programs designed to help farmers
- 44 with financial stress.
- 45 11. Support the Illinois Finance Authority's (IFA) current agricultural loan programs and will
- 46 cooperate with IFA in the expansion of existing programs and the development of new
- 47 programs.
- 48 12. Actively seek legislation so that persons who have made prepayments to failed licensees
- 49 for production inputs or services will receive a 100 percent refund of those payments,
- 50 making the purchaser of the inputs first in line as a secured creditor.
- 51 13. Support increased funding for federal guaranteed farm loan programs. These programs
- 52 should be made more user friendly for both bankers and farmers by allowing increased
- 53 flexibility of repayment terms and minimizing paperwork. Financial management training
- 54
- 55

- 1 should be made available to farmers to help make them more competitive in seeking
2 available credit.
- 3 14. Actively seek legislation so that alfalfa and grassland forages are considered farm storage
4 facility loan commodities.
- 5 15. Support elimination of the "exit provision" in the Farm Credit Act.
6

7 We oppose:

- 8 1. Any move by commercial banks and/or bankers to alter the structure of the Farm Credit
9 System (FCS), including attempts to replace farmers on boards of directors with
10 commercial bankers.
- 11 2. Commercial banks having access to money procured by virtue of the agency status
12 enjoyed by the FCS.
- 13 3. The sale of district Farm Credit Service Banks to commercial or private banking interests.
- 14 4. All efforts to limit access to credit by major credit suppliers or to limit competition or to
15 artificially set interest rates by government edict.
16

17 While competition in Farm Credit markets is in the best long-term interests of agriculture, we
18 encourage commercial banks, the FCS, and other lenders to seek out opportunities to cooperate
19 in meeting the financing needs of farmers. The FCS must remain available to the farmer-owner
20 of FCS through the cooperative system as an alternative to commercial banks.
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24 **79. GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICIES**

25

26 Government economic policies should be designed to encourage economic stability, increased
27 productivity, a greater competitive ability in the international market, and a high level of economic
28 well being.
29

30 We support:

- 31 1. Using a federal budget surplus to reduce the federal debt and to cut taxes.
- 32 2. Federal policies bringing about lower real interest rates.
- 33 3. A reduction in the size of the federal government.
- 34 4. A constitutional amendment to require the federal government to operate on a balanced
35 budget.
- 36 5. A constitutional amendment to restrict the spending authority of the federal government to
37 a realistic percentage of the gross national product (GNP).
- 38 6. A requirement that federal and state government agencies return unspent money to their
39 respective treasuries without a budget cut or penalty for the new fiscal year.
- 40 7. Legislation or a constitutional amendment to require the federal government to fund
41 programs which it mandates on state or local governments.
- 42 8. The use of competitive bidding, cost containment, reductions in waste and a requirement
43 that new programs be adopted only when existing programs are reduced or eliminated to
44 offset the cost of the new program as a means to control government spending.
- 45 9. Requiring competitive bidding for any major state or federal project to ensure the most
46 efficient development and construction of those projects.
- 47 10. Privatization of governmental services that could provide savings to the taxpayer and
48 render government services more economical.
49

50 We oppose:

- 51 1. Awarding federal grant monies to citizen action groups.
52
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- 1 2. Increased taxes unless accompanied by significant spending cuts. In such cases, the tax
- 2 base should be broadened rather than increasing existing tax rates.
- 3 3. Efforts to shift programs “on budget” or “off budget” in order to mask the true economic
- 4 condition of our nation.
- 5 4. The financing of gambling facilities through tax exempt industrial development bonds or
- 6 state guaranteed loans.
- 7 5. Expansion of gambling without local approval.

8
9 The goal of monetary policy should be general price level stability. The Federal Reserve should
10 conduct a sustained, long-term monetary policy which will minimize inflation and deflation of
11 prices. We favor an independent Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Someone
12 on the Board should have a working knowledge of agriculture. We favor a full and complete
13 independent annual audit of all activities of the Federal Reserve System.

14
15 We will continue to make the adoption of sound economic policies by the state and federal
16 government a major priority. We urge county Farm Bureaus to do likewise.

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20 **80. GOVERNMENT FARM POLICIES**

21
22 We believe United States agriculture should be an integral part of the solution for hunger, energy,
23 environment, food security, our balance of trade, and national security. In order to accomplish
24 these goals, the farm bill must address world competition, humanitarian need, and world trade
25 obligations. A stable, safe agricultural production system is essential to the United States’
26 economy and national security.

27
28 To accomplish this objective, we believe:

- 29 1. Consumers should have a reliable, abundant, safe, and nutritious food supply.
- 30 2. In enhancing U.S. agriculture’s competitiveness in the world market.
- 31 3. In minimizing world hunger and nutrition deficiencies.
- 32 4. In creating a long-term, competitive, desirable agricultural growth industry.
- 33 5. In improving the quality of rural life by increasing rural economic development.
- 34 6. In providing revenue protection to farmers thus protecting net farm income.
- 35 7. The market should give accurate economic signals to consumers and farmers.
- 36 8. There should be less reliance on government and more on the market.
- 37 9. Improvements to the environment can be achieved through expanded soil conservation,
- 38 water and air quality initiatives, and advanced technological procedures that are science-
- 39 based and are economically feasible.
- 40 10. Farmers should be compensated for their positive impact on habitat, wildlife, and the
- 41 environment.

42
43 We oppose:

- 44 1. Any type of government supply control or acreage reduction program, with the exception
- 45 of conservation programs.
- 46 2. A Farmer Owned Reserve for agricultural commodities.
- 47 3. The extension of Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) commodity loans beyond the
- 48 current nine-month term.

49
50 We support:

- 51 1. The market-oriented concepts of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008
- 52 farm bill).

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- 1 2. Appropriate income assistance until reforms in taxation, regulation, and market access
2 and growth are achieved.
- 3 3. Maintaining the sanctity of contracts established in the farm bill.
- 4 4. Allowing tenants with multiple landlords to treat each farm as a separate entity for
5 compliance with the farm bill.
- 6 5. Not holding tenants responsible for landlord's actions of farm program payments and
7 eligibility. This should hold steady as long as the tenant had no involvement in what took
8 place. The farm in question should go through the hearing process but other farms should
9 not be affected. Actions by a landlord should not place any tenant farm program
10 payments in jeopardy. The tenant should be able to maintain eligibility for all farms.
- 11 6. The ability of landlords to refuse payment from the farm program and allow tenants the
12 ability to obtain complete payment from the farm program (even if a combination lease
13 exists between the landlord and tenant).
- 14 7. The elimination of any United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirement to
15 report the specific cash rental amounts outlined in lease agreements between a landlord
16 and a tenant in an effort to protect a farmer's right to privacy. We do, however, support
17 the requirement to report the type of lease agreement.
- 18 8. Strengthening the criteria for non-landowner persons eligible for farm program payments
19 by requiring a significant contribution of active personal management in the farm decision-
20 making process and labor in the farming operation. The current exemption for crop share
21 landowners should be continued.
- 22 9. Farmers ability to improve existing drainage systems without being penalized. Land that
23 has been in production, including pasture, should be exempt from the sodbuster and
24 swampbuster provisions.
- 25 10. Simplification of USDA procedures.
- 26 11. Consolidation of the power of attorney form to enable the Natural Resource Conservation
27 Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to honor the same power of attorney
28 forms.
- 29 12. Open enrollment of land in the farm program that was not previously in the program and
30 has changed tenancy or ownership during the duration of the farm bill.
- 31 13. The use of disaster payments until we can transition to an actuarially-sound crop
32 insurance program by crop, county, and state.
- 33 14. Government agencies serving farmers by adjusting hours to accommodate the needs of
34 farmers with off-farm employment and increased use of internet for electronic filing.
- 35 15. The means to implement and administer programs being in place prior to starting dates for
36 new programs.
- 37 16. Adding alfalfa and grassland forages as covered commodities.
- 38 17. The continuation and expansion of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
39 and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with full funding, as long as these
40 programs complement – but do not replace – programs in the new farm bill.
- 41 18. Providing a clear explanation of the CSP that would create interest and help more farmers
42 qualify for this program.

43 44 **Future Farm Policy**

45 We support a WTO-compliant farm bill that provides revenue protection for farmers and includes
46 the following concepts and provisions:

- 47 1. Direct payments at the levels established in the 2008 farm bill for current program
48 commodities.
 - 49 2. Increased coverage levels for the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program.
 - 50 3. An increase in the subsidy levels of the crop insurance program at existing crop insurance
51 coverage levels.
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1 We also support:

- 2 1. An extension of the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) that
3 would include permanent funding to replace ad hoc disaster programs and a more timely
4 and responsive payment schedule.
- 5 2. A commodity loan program.
- 6 3. Raising loan rates above levels established in the 2008 farm bill for current program
7 commodities and loan repayments be credited back to CCC to maintain budget neutrality.
- 8 4. The opportunity for individual farmers to "buy-up" additional revenue protection at their
9 discretion.
- 10 5. Payments or programs that compensate farmers for activities deemed socially or
11 environmentally beneficial.
- 12 6. Planting flexibility for all crops.
- 13 7. Encouraging production and stewardship decisions that will attract public support.
- 14 8. Allowing farms that have not been participating in farm programs and are not eligible to
15 receive program benefits to establish a base and enroll in future farm programs.

18 **81. LABOR**

19
20
21 We will support:

- 22 1. A proactive and positive effort to pursue a dialogue with organized labor to identify
23 common ground and common goals to achieve a common good.
- 24 2. The effective and prompt administration of existing laws to resolve secondary boycotts or
25 other illegal actions which disrupt the orderly flow of commerce.
- 26 3. Maintaining the agriculture exemption for overtime pay provisions under the Illinois
27 Minimum Wage Law.
- 28 4. A study by the appropriate state agencies regarding the programs and activities of
29 federally funded Legal Services Corporation entities in Illinois. Such a study would review
30 the impact of such programs on agricultural operations.
- 31 5. The American Farm Bureau Federation efforts in lobbying Congress to investigate the
32 Legal Service Corporation's behavior and scrutinize its budget.
- 33 6. The minimum wage rate at its current level and support an increase only when it is
34 believed to be non-inflationary.
- 35 7. The passage of federal legislation to establish a program for temporary agricultural guest
36 workers that assist all crop and livestock farmers in finding, retaining, and maintaining
37 an adequate, legal, and cost-competitive labor supply.
- 38 8. More effective enforcement of our existing immigration laws to deter the employment of
39 unauthorized workers.

40
41 We will oppose:

- 42 1. The use, by either labor or management, of force, coercion, intimidation, secondary
43 boycotts or other such means designed to force its will upon the other.
- 44 2. Frivolous lawsuits which are filed against agricultural growers by Legal Services
45 Corporation entities which create economic hardship for the agricultural operations
46 involved and appear to be intended only to harass the employer of farm labor into
47 providing additional benefits without justification.
- 48 3. All legislation which increases the revenue base for legal assistance activities in the State
49 of Illinois.
- 50 4. Legislation that would require state licensure and inspection for electrical work performed
51 on agricultural property and single-family residences.
- 52 5. The elimination of the present family farm exemption in the child labor provisions of the
53 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

- 1 6. Amnesty (as defined as a general pardon for offenses against the laws of the United
2 States of America) for undocumented immigrants.
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6 82. SOCIAL SECURITY 7

8 We support:

- 9 1. Studies and pilot programs testing the feasibility of private sector alternatives to Social
10 Security as a means to devise long-term solutions to maintain the solvency of the Social
11 Security trust fund and to ensure retirement benefits for younger Americans. Such studies
12 and pilot programs should be devised to protect the benefits of the current and future
13 recipients.
14 2. Stabilizing benefits rather than increasing Social Security taxes.
15 3. Continued separate deductions for Social Security taxes to make them clearly identifiable.
16 4. Correction of the inequity in the method of determining earnings of self-employed persons
17 subject to Social Security taxes when a substantial portion of the earnings are related to a
18 return on investment in business property. A rent equivalent should be made an allowable
19 deduction from earnings for this purpose.
20 5. Allowing self-employed persons to deduct their Social Security taxes as a business
21 expense.
22

23 We oppose:

- 24 1. Regulations which classify Conservation Reserve Program payments to Social Security
25 recipients as earned income. They should be considered as rent.
26 2. Social Security payments to alien workers who reside outside the U.S. or its territories.
27 3. The use of a total farm payroll test to determine if wages are subject to Social Security
28 taxes.
29 4. Using Social Security funds for purposes other than Social Security.
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33 83. ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC IMAGE 34

35 We will continue to work with and encourage agribusiness industries, through their advertising, to
36 present a positive and professional image of farmers and agriculture to the general public.
37

38 We encourage individual farmers to express their opinions with their local dealers and
39 company representatives about agricultural product advertising on television. All advertising
40 should convey the image of the farmer as a responsible user of these products.
41

42 We will encourage companies that provide animal feeds, shelter, and health products to advertise
43 the positive aspects of animal production in addition to advertising the products used for animal
44 production.
45

46 We support the creation of a separate stand alone not-for-profit agricultural image organization
47 that unites consumers, farmers, and businesses under a common cause which improves the
48 image of agriculture and confronts negative advertising and promotional efforts that are impacting
49 our industry.
50

51 We favor programs that encourage county Farm Bureaus to join together with other farm
52 organizations to support activities to reach the greatest number of people with messages
53 designed to improve public understanding of agriculture. These activities should be a
54 cooperative venture in which county Farm Bureaus and the Illinois Agricultural Association join
55

1 together in planning, executing and funding displays, exhibits, and other public relations activities
2 for major expositions and other similar events in Illinois.

3
4 We will actively communicate and promote to news outlets and all forms of the media a
5 consistent message that farming professionals are front line, responsible stewards of our
6 environment.

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10 **84. FARM BUREAU RELATIONSHIP WITH AFFILIATED COMPANIES**

11
12 We believe that Farm Bureau members are the foundation upon which all affiliated companies
13 were built.

14
15 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to:

- 16 1. Maintain and improve their working relationship with affiliated company boards of directors
17 and management through interlocking board members and other means.
- 18 2. Hold periodic affiliated company and Farm Bureau joint board meetings on both the state
19 and county level and to hold regular county Farm Bureau and affiliated company joint staff
20 meetings.

21
22 We encourage affiliated companies, whenever practical, to consult with the Illinois Agricultural
23 Association (IAA) and county Farm Bureaus before initiating major changes in products, services,
24 policies, and operating procedures that impact the Farm Bureau organizations or Farm Bureau
25 members. Such consultation is intended to generate wide understanding of the purpose and
26 necessity of the proposed changes and to allow the Farm Bureau organizations and Farm
27 Bureau members to express their thoughts and insights on the impact of the proposed changes.

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31 **85. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS**

32
33 We support regulations to protect the public health, safety and welfare, provided:

- 34 1. The regulations are based upon scientific data which has been subject to replication and
35 peer review.
- 36 2. The costs as well as the benefits of the regulations have been carefully weighed.
- 37 3. The regulations have been subject to independent analysis and public scrutiny.
- 38 4. Alternatives to regulation have been considered, especially the provision of market-based
39 incentives.
- 40 5. The regulations respect the practicalities of doing business in the industry being regulated.

41
42 We, in cooperation with American Farm Bureau Federation, should place greater emphasis on
43 the regulatory process to better protect agriculture's interest during rule-making. The U.S.
44 Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) should be required to collaborate with the U.S.
45 Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the development of conservation, and clean air and water
46 regulations impacting agriculture. Members should increase their involvement in the regulatory
47 process by responding during comment periods to ensure that those writing regulations better
48 understand the potential impact on individuals.

49
50 Regulations promulgated as a result of congressional or state legislative action should be
51 reviewed by the congressional committee of jurisdiction for federal regulations and the Joint
52 Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) for state regulations prior to implementation in order
53 to ensure that the legislative intent is being followed.

1 **86. INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS IN FARM BUREAU**

2
3 We believe the county Farm Bureaus are the strength of the Illinois Agricultural Association. We
4 recognize that county Farm Bureaus are important to the individual members and it is these
5 individual members that become the most integral parts of the Illinois Agricultural Association.
6 The support and direction of the individual members are of utmost importance to the
7 organization.

8
9 The thinking, direction and support of all members are needed in our organization. We urge
10 active involvement of men and women of all ages in the committee structure on the state and
11 county level. We will continue efforts to strengthen county and state member programs to
12 enhance the value of Farm Bureau membership.

13
14 We especially urge county Farm Bureaus to appoint at least one member of the Women's and
15 Young Farmer/Young Leader Committees to serve on county Farm Bureau standing committees.
16 The representatives of each county committee should meet regularly with their Board of
17 Directors.

18
19 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to present opportunities for active members to gain the
20 background and experience necessary to be effective leaders. These future leaders will then
21 become spokespersons for Illinois Agricultural Association and county Farm Bureaus and the
22 greatest industry in the world—agriculture.

23
24 The Young Farmer/Young Leader Committee is important in assuring the maximum opportunity
25 for young farmers to participate in Farm Bureau programs.

26
27 Counties are encouraged to follow the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Young Farmer
28 and Rancher program age limits so that county Young Farmer and Young Leader Committees
29 will be eligible for the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Young Leader and AFBF Young Leader and
30 Rancher programs.

31
32
33 **87. LEGISLATIVE AND AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP**

34
35 We will:

- 36
37 1. Take aggressive positions in the development of legislation and regulations.
38 2. Involve county Farm Bureau leaders and members in the legislative and regulatory
39 process.
40 3. Involve various groups and organizations in the development of such legislation and
41 regulations when there is common interest in order to find the best solutions to the
42 complex problems facing us.
43 4. Cooperate with county Farm Bureaus in developing and implementing programs to
44 familiarize legislators with rural problems and concerns and to familiarize rural leaders
45 with urban problems and concerns.

46
47 We urge the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Illinois Agricultural Association to take a
48 leadership role in working with groups and organizations with common goals to help develop a
49 common policy position on national legislation and regulations.
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88. MEMBER AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

We will develop and implement programs to make Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA) and county Farm Bureaus more visible and to publicize more of what IAA and county Farm Bureaus are doing for agriculture as professional organizations.

We support maintaining a reward program to reward informants who provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons who commit theft, arson, or vandalism to the property or premises of Illinois Agricultural Association members.

In order to build and maintain favorable public attitude toward farmers and farming, we will:

- 1. Continue to monitor public opinion toward agriculture and formulate public relations programs to maintain the farmer's favorable image.
- 2. Develop a centralized information resource to keep members informed on key issues of public concern so they can respond to those concerns in their day-to-day contacts.
- 3. Continue information programs which will help non-farmer members of Illinois Farm Bureau better understand and support the goals and objectives of the organization.

89. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

We support a person's right to individually or collectively contribute time and money to candidates of his or her choice. We recognize the vital role such participation plays and will seek to secure the substantial participation of farmers in the political process, both as individual citizens and members of the Illinois Agricultural Association.

We strongly defend a person's opportunity to participate in the legislative process on an equal basis with those who have been active in donating their time and money to campaigns. We urge the vigorous enforcement of rules which secure fair play and equal access to government for all people.

We favor the continued establishment and expansion of political involvement programs to promote Farm Bureau policy by aiding and promoting candidates for public office who, through their actions, have supported the goals and purposes of the Illinois Agricultural Association.

90. RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION

We urge all media, governmental agencies, and health care professionals to be unbiased and accurate in their public statements to avoid unwarranted fear among the general public.

We support:

- 1. Concerted efforts to use scientific names in reference to a particular virus or disease.
- 2. Balanced reporting that maintains a risk relation factor between agricultural/consumer benefits and possible risks.
- 3. Aggressively challenging individuals and organizations who misrepresent scientific evidence and cause financial damage to farmers.

1 **91. UNIFORM COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT**

2
3 We urge county Farm Bureau boards of directors to review annually the Uniform Cooperative
4 Agreement between the county Farm Bureaus and the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA).
5 Attention should be given to the need for counties and the IAA Board of Directors to support
6 policy positions once adopted by the IAA delegates.
7

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10 **92. 9-1-1 TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

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12 We support the enhanced 9-1-1 telephone system in the State of Illinois. We will encourage and
13 assist county Farm Bureaus in the support of a referendum for the passage of an enhanced 9-1-1
14 telephone system and provide input into the implementation of the local system.
15

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18 **93. FAMILY**

19
20 We reaffirm our belief that the strength of every civilized society is the family. We believe a family
21 should be defined as persons who are related by blood, marriage between a man and a woman,
22 or legal adoption. The encouragement of the family unit where morals, obligations,
23 responsibilities, and work ethics are exemplified and taught is of paramount importance. This
24 must be considered an individual and local responsibility.
25

26 We vigorously oppose any federal funding or support of programs that contribute to the
27 breakdown of the family and oppose any legislation that gives the federal government increased
28 involvement in child care services. Child care services can best be addressed at the local level
29 or by the private sector.
30

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32
33 **94. FARM SAFETY**

34
35 We encourage all county Farm Bureaus to develop and maintain an aggressive farm safety
36 education program to help protect our current and future generations. It is especially important
37 that youth receive age appropriate training in farm safety.
38

39 We will work to enhance the safety of farmers by encouraging them to use and, when
40 necessary, replace safety lighting, markings, and reflective devices that are of extreme
41 importance when used on farm machinery. We encourage the use and placement of reflective
42 material and safety lighting on farm equipment that conforms with the latest American Society of
43 Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) marking standards.
44

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47 **95. FOOD LABELING**

48 We will support:

- 49
50 1. Promotion of increased use of nutritional information on food labels.
51 2. Proper labeling of foods, fibers, and other agricultural products.
52 3. Establishing criteria for a certification process and corresponding legislation for country of
53 origin labeling. The process should support farmer self-certification of origin of
54
55

- 1 livestock; operate under a presumption of domestic origin; and not be financially
- 2 burdensome to farmers in establishing record keeping criteria.
- 3 4. Development of a "U.S. Product" label for products that are originated, produced, and
- 4 processed in the U.S.
- 5 5. A voluntary labeling and/or traceability system for identity-preserved agricultural and food
- 6 products that is based on a clear and factual certification process in order to ensure the
- 7 health, safety, and integrity of the product, and enhance the ability of the farmer to capture
- 8 a value-added return.
- 9 6. Voluntary labeling of biotech or non-biotech products when an approved certification
- 10 process is in place including:
- 11 A. The development of a consumer-friendly icon or label indicating presence of
- 12 genetically modified materials in food.
- 13 B. Positive labeling of biotech products that is science-based, truthful, and not
- 14 misleading.
- 15 7. The science-based labeling policies of U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA),
- 16 including:
- 17 A. No special labeling unless a food is significantly different than its traditional
- 18 counterpart, or where a specific constituent is altered (e.g., nutritionally or when
- 19 affecting allergenicity).
- 20 B. Voluntary labeling using statements which are truthful and not misleading.
- 21 8. Vigorous enforcement of FDA food labeling guidelines for domestic and imported products.
- 22

23 We will oppose:

- 24 1. Negative labeling of food products as being derived from the use of biotechnology.
- 25 2. Labels that state or imply organic food is superior to traditional agri-food products or that
- 26 imply negative consequences of consuming non-organic foods over organic products.
- 27 3. The use of "all natural" and "GMO free" synonymously with "organic" as a way to avoid
- 28 farmer certification as an organic grower.
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32 **96. FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT**

33

34 The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) provides the foundation for ongoing approval of

35 substances used in food and agricultural production. It is imperative that agricultural groups

36 ensure the FQPA is being reviewed and implemented as originally intended.

37

38 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must:

- 39 1. Commit to use science, as intended by Congress, in fulfilling the FQPA mandate.
- 40 2. Establish a fair and transparent decision making process.
- 41 3. End the practice of using unduly conservative end points, safety factors, and default
- 42 assumptions.
- 43 4. Give higher priority to making scientific decisions rather than completing final tolerance
- 44 reassessments by statutory deadlines. Sound science requires good data and valid
- 45 methodologies, which require time to develop.
- 46 5. Avoid removing uses that pose theoretical risk based on unreasonable, worst case
- 47 assumptions.
- 48 6. Abandon the idea of wholesale revocation of tolerances for the organophosphate
- 49 insecticides.
- 50 7. Develop proposed policies and methods for risk allocation, and submit them for public
- 51 notice and comment review.
- 52 8. Redress the current resource imbalance between tolerance reassessment and new
- 53 chemical/new use registration and accelerate the pace of making decisions on new
- 54 products and uses.
- 55

- 1 9. In the event of registration cancellation, allow time for pesticide users to make a
2 reasonable transition to alternative products.
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6 97. FOOD SAFETY 7

8 Food safety issues in the United States are becoming increasingly involved in foreign and
9 domestic policy. It is important that the state and national Farm Bureaus continue to actively
10 implement a communications strategy on food safety issues to provide accurate information to
11 the media, to educate the public, and to raise public awareness of the actions farmers are taking
12 to produce a plentiful, high quality supply of food at fair prices. We will monitor initiatives to
13 improve and streamline food safety to ensure that the policies and procedures are in place that
14 build trust and reliability in U.S. agriculture.
15

16 We support:

- 17 1. Measures to improve food inspection and safety through the United States Department of
18 Agriculture (USDA) Inspection Service to assure consumers of a safe food supply. These
19 measures should reinforce consumer confidence while being cost effective.
20 2. Protection of our food supply by requiring that imported food products be subjected to the
21 same high safety standards and testing as food produced in the United States.
22 3. Consumer education through labeling regarding safe cooking and storage procedures.
23 4. National uniformity in pesticide residue standards. Consideration should be given to the
24 benefits of crop protection products.
25 5. The concept of negligible risk rather than zero tolerance.
26 6. Cooperative efforts with food processors, chemical companies, governmental agencies,
27 scientists and others who are responsible for the food supply of our nation to provide
28 factual information on the safety of our food supply.
29 7. Open communication, not confrontation, with responsible environmental groups.
30 8. The use of modern technology in the processing and handling of food to assure food
31 safety and promote consumer confidence in the food supply.
32 9. USDA as the federal agency responsible for food inspection and safety.
33 10. National (USDA) and state food inspection programs that guarantee adequate inspectors
34 and funding for businesses in both domestic and imported food products.
35 11. The establishment of a USDA-approval process for state-inspected slaughter and
36 processing plants that allows them to ship interstate.
37 12. Immediate and longer-term actions by USDA and the Department of Homeland Security
38 (DHS) to raise the priority of, and resources devoted to, federal safety and inspection
39 services, including: the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), Animal and Plant Health
40 Inspection Service (APHIS), and the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).
41 13. The establishment of voluntary guidelines which minimize microbial food safety hazards
42 for fresh fruits and vegetables. The guidelines should:
43 A. Be based on science.
44 B. Remain voluntary, not mandatory.
45 C. Remain generic in nature, not commodity specific, to accommodate the diversity of
46 the fresh fruit and vegetable industry.
47 D. Be implemented in a manner that does not impede our ability to export.
48 E. Be developed by recognized industry representatives.
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98. HEALTH CARE

Rural Health Care Quality and Accessibility

We support:

1. Increasing awareness of the health care resources available to rural populations.
2. Providing additional health care resources where needed.
3. Efforts to direct state funding to medical schools to train additional qualified family physicians who will practice medicine in rural areas.
4. Residency programs to provide post-graduate family physician and primary care training away from major metropolitan-based medical training centers.
5. Programs and incentives to encourage doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals to practice in rural Illinois.
6. The development and implementation of programs to assess rural hospital programs, rural health care facilities, and alternative methods of delivering rural health care.
7. Efforts to develop mobile medical equipment and facilities to bring basic health care services to rural areas of the state.
8. Adequate ambulance service in all rural areas.
9. State regulations to allow the development of limited service hospitals to meet emergency care and other needs where the market will not support a traditional full-service hospital.
10. Legislation that provides exemptions to new state and federal regulations for volunteer fire departments and ambulance services.
11. The maximum possible use of the private sector in providing health care.
12. Increased funding and improved delivery of mental health services to rural populations.
13. Exemptions in the two Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) rule to allow rural ambulances to proceed to the scene of an emergency call.
14. Granting continuing education credit to EMTs for their time spent responding to emergency calls.
15. The expansion of the size and scope of the Rural Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program (RNPSP).
16. An increase in state appropriations for programs that allow for recruitment, training, and retention of additional health care professionals to serve rural counties of Illinois.

We will:

1. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to host or sponsor community forums of interested professional and lay groups to assess rural health care and facilities in their county.
2. Continue to support the Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program (RIMSAP) in its efforts to provide medical practitioners for rural communities in Illinois. We encourage expansion of that program to meet the changing health care needs of rural Illinois.
3. Encourage the American Farm Bureau Federation to place a higher priority on its continuing study of the problems of the delivery of health care services in the United States.
4. Support an Agricultural Physicians and Nursing Program that would educate health care professionals in dealing with agricultural accidents and injuries.
5. Work with the Illinois Department of Public Health to reinstate and maintain all levels of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and testing at convenient locations throughout the state as administered prior to the elimination of EMT basic level testing in Illinois. This will ensure that adequate volunteer services can be retained as a Basic Life System (BLS) and minimize additional mandatory training placed on Emergency Medical Technician Basics (EMT-B). Additional unfunded mandates will impose hardships on the rural volunteer emergency ambulance services. The state of Illinois should look at ways to provide funds for any additional mandates.
6. Encourage funding to rural ambulance services to increase their ability to employ additional certified Pre-Hospital Registered Nurse (PHRN), strengthening their rural emergency response and treatment capabilities.

7. Work to establish a unified EMT and Fire Service Training/Cadet program in which high school students who meet the requirements of the State of Illinois and of the program are able to serve in rural areas.
8. Support the concept of providing health insurance through the market place by allowing portability including insuring pre-existing conditions.

Payment for Health Care Services

We support:

1. Allowing Medicare recipients to purchase private health care plans that are actuarially equivalent to the current Medicare plan. The plan would receive a payment from Medicare to cover some or all of the costs of the premium.
2. Incentives which could be provided to Medicare recipients to allow them to participate in private or alternative plans.
3. Efforts to eliminate or significantly reduce cost shifting from Medicaid and Medicare to individuals and third party payers.
4. Privately funded optional care delivery systems such as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO's).
5. Efforts to encourage the medical profession to accept Medicare assignments. Rural and urban hospitals should be reimbursed equally for providing services to Medicare and Medicaid patients.
6. Relaxation of state and federal mandates which require that certain provisions be included in all health insurance policies. Consumers should be given choices as to what provisions are included in their health insurance programs.
7. Further expansion of medical savings accounts that would qualify for a tax credit to allow individuals and their employees to set aside money in anticipation of future health care costs.
8. An increase in the limit of the contribution amount for all health savings accounts.
9. Consideration of a voluntary regional insurance purchasing cooperative to permit individuals and small companies to receive the same price advantages that corporations receive.
10. Efforts to simplify and make uniform all insurance forms to reduce the cost of processing.
11. Efforts to detect fraud and abuse of Medicare and Medicaid. We encourage swift and vigorous prosecution of those who are found guilty of defrauding these programs.

We will seek legislation to allow non-penalty and tax-free transfers from IRA's to health savings accounts for major medical emergencies.

We urge repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and support a more market oriented system of health care delivery.

We oppose:

1. Mandated employer-provided health insurance.
2. All tax increases to solve the Medicare problem.
3. Any further tightening of Medicare provider reimbursement.
4. Increasing Medicaid eligibility, in an effort to have national health care reform, that would result in increased cost shifting to the states.

Health Care Delivery Cost

We support:

1. Programs to reduce the inflation in health care costs.

- 1 2. The development and implementation of programs to provide incentives for consumers to
2 practice wellness and disease prevention.
- 3 3. Tort reform to reduce the practice of defensive medicine (i.e. redundant, excessive or
4 unnecessary testing primarily for purposes of liability concerns rather than diagnostic
5 purposes).
- 6 4. Every possible effort to affect cost management while providing accessible high quality
7 health care.
- 8 5. State and federal efforts to reduce medical malpractice insurance costs, including
9 limitations on certain punitive and non-economic damage awards, pre-filing mediation
10 boards, and peer review.
- 11 6. The use of innovations such as surgical centers or outpatient facilities to allow consumers
12 to opt out of expensive hospital costs when they are unnecessary.
- 13 7. The development of an aggressive education-information program for health care
14 consumers to assist them in selecting the most cost-effective health care procedures.
- 15 8. Encouragement of regional hospitals to specialize in specific treatment areas with shared
16 access to eliminate unnecessary duplication of equipment and personnel.
- 17 9. A periodic review of state regulations and licensing requirements for hospitals and medical
18 professionals to determine the appropriateness of the regulations and licensing
19 requirements in light of changes in the health care delivery system.
- 20 10. Efforts to allow consumers to purchase medications that are physician prescribed, as
21 opposed to having to accept a substitute, in order to receive any reimbursement from their
22 insurance carrier.
- 23
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- 25

26 **99. NUTRITION**

27
28 We support:

- 29 1. USDA efforts to expand the use of dietetically wholesome and nutritious foods in all school
30 meals and other nutrition programs and shall not be limited to locally-grown or organic
31 production.
- 32 2. Renaming high fructose corn syrup to corn sugar.
- 33
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- 35

36 **100. PUBLIC AID**

37
38 We will support:

- 39 1. Public aid based on individual needs, but will not support public aid programs so lucrative
40 that there is an economic advantage in becoming a recipient.
- 41 2. Greater uniformity in residency requirements and relative levels of payment among the
42 states in all categories of public aid.
- 43 3. More careful supervision of welfare payments at the local level.
- 44 4. Use of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds for only those foods
45 that are dietetically wholesome and nutritious and shall not be limited to locally-grown or
46 organic production.
- 47 5. Legislation requiring able-bodied recipients to work in order to be eligible for receipt of
48 public aid. Such work could include work on public or civic projects.
- 49 6. Shifting responsibility of public aid programs from the federal to the state government
50 through the use of block grants.
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101. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

We will place rural development as one of our highest priorities.

We will:

1. Examine existing private and government rural development programs to determine their viability and practicality in improving the rural economy and quality of life in Illinois.
2. Support allowing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program to make loan guarantees to farmer-owned projects sited in urban or urbanizing areas if the locations are the most economically viable to return benefits to the rural owners of the project.
3. Monitor the impact of the new definition of "Micropolitan Areas" and, if negative economic effects of rural areas are observed, support changes to that definition to better serve rural areas.
4. Develop a comprehensive program for coordinating rural development activities within the state and county Farm Bureau levels.
5. Support entrepreneurial programs that promote rural economic development including business incubator programs in rural high schools.
6. Identify specific rural initiatives which our organization will support during the development of our comprehensive program.
7. Urge county Farm Bureaus to take a leadership role in rural development programs and activities in cooperation with local business, political and agricultural leaders.
8. Provide county Farm Bureaus advice and guidance on rural development programs.
9. Work closely with county Farm Bureaus in the beginning and continuous stages of the rural development process, emphasizing the need for community development and economic development.
10. Urge the federal government to fully fund Rural Partners and similar projects. Additional federal funds should be provided to these types of projects which use volunteers instead of government agencies to solve rural problems.
11. Support additional USDA Rural Development funding and targeting a greater portion of all funds towards stimulating commerce in rural areas.
12. Support increased USDA Rural Development funding for technical and marketing assistance to provide value-added opportunities for farmers.
13. Support the concept of integrating community services through a single, local economic unit (such as a school) through voluntary local initiatives.
14. Support the designation of a government-based clearinghouse at both the federal and state levels to provide one-stop-shopping for information, coordination of all information regarding government sponsored or aided rural development programs, and information on allied non-governmental programs.
15. Support state and federal legislation to assist local governments to develop integrated Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
16. Urge local governments, when considering offering incentives for the purpose of spurring economic development, to:
 - A. Balance new-growth incentives against those available to existing businesses;
 - B. Make incentives contingent on promised performance;
 - C. Carefully examine program costs relative to the increase in economic activity and tax revenue generated by the development.
17. Support efforts to develop a program and support funding for low-interest loans to assist small business owners in locating and training a successor who would then purchase the business and continue its operation.
18. Encourage landowners to consider the value of allowing easements that improve rural services in areas that need the access to better water services.
19. Work with rural electric cooperatives, telephone cooperatives, and other entities that have existing infrastructure and expertise to provide broadband service to all rural areas. We

- 1 encourage these entities to use grants and other sources of monetary assistance to
2 provide these broadband services.
3 20. Support increased sources and levels of funding for developing and expanding broadband
4 telecommunications service to rural areas.
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8 **102. BUSINESS CLIMATE IN ILLINOIS**

9

10 To regain a prosperous climate in Illinois in which to live and work, we will support legislation to:

- 11 1. Moderate the increasing cost of unemployment compensation.
12 2. Reduce costs involved in providing Worker's Compensation benefits.
13 3. Repeal the prevailing wage laws relating to public works projects. Failing to repeal, we
14 will support legislation to reduce the burden of the prevailing wage on public bodies
15 outside of major metropolitan areas.
16 4. Bring Illinois' minimum wage law in line with federal minimum wage law.
17

18 We will oppose efforts to incorporate into law the doctrine of "comparable worth" as it relates to
19 compensation levels for various types of jobs.
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23 **103. COMPENSATION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

24

25 We support legislation to require Congress and the Illinois General Assembly to vote by a roll call
26 vote on any legislation that would increase the pay or pension of its members.
27

28 Pay and pension legislation should be voted on as a separate issue and not be tied to unrelated
29 legislation.
30

31 We support and encourage legislation that would deny all state employment-related benefits to
32 any state employee who is convicted under any federal, state, or local law of theft,
33 embezzlement, or accepting bribes in connection with the employee's service as a state
34 employee. We support and encourage an amendment to the Illinois Pension Code and/or other
35 current law to the extent necessary to implement this proposed legislation.
36

37 We support capping the pension amount that a state legislator can receive regardless of their
38 length of service or the position(s) they hold with the state after leaving the legislature.
39

40 We support a requirement for public employees to contribute a greater amount to their public
41 pensions.
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45 **104. DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE**

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47 We support vigorous enforcement of the current driving under the influence laws and legislative
48 efforts to improve those laws.
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1 **105. ELECTIONS**

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3 We will support:

- 4 1. State legislation modifying the present consolidated election law so that the right of secret
- 5 ballot is protected.
- 6 2. Efforts to shorten political campaigns by moving primaries closer to general elections,
- 7 provided county clerks have ample time to prepare for the general election.
- 8 3. A limit on campaign spending and franking privileges.
- 9 4. Reform of federal campaign laws to include:
 - 10 A. A strengthening of campaign spending limitation laws to prevent abuse through the
 - 11 use of "soft money" and independent expenditures.
 - 12 B. An increase in the allowable contribution an individual may make to a candidate.
- 13 5. Efforts to require that individuals registering to vote, and during voting, to present
- 14 government issued photo identification.
- 15 6. Efforts to further consolidate elections in order to streamline the system and reduce
- 16 taxpayers' expense.

17
18 We oppose the use of the Internet for voting in any local, state, or federal election.

19
20 We oppose the current Illinois Undervote Notification Law and will support legislation to repeal it.

21
22 We encourage that at least half of a candidate's contributions come from within the district or

23 state in which they are seeking office.

24
25 We will actively participate in any legislation and other activities that will involve electoral reforms.

26
27 We support uniform signature requirements, on nominating petitions, regardless of political party,

28 for candidates seeking public office.

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31 **106. FARM EQUIPMENT**

32
33 We will support:

- 34 1. Efforts to clarify and simplify the vehicle code and regulations relating to farm vehicles.
- 35 2. Efforts by Illinois Agricultural Association and county Farm Bureaus to encourage proper
- 36 use and law enforcement agencies to enforce proper use of slow moving vehicle (SMV)
- 37 emblems.
- 38 3. Efforts to encourage retailers of SMV emblems to provide information with each such sale
- 39 informing consumers of regulations regarding the proper use of the SMV and the potential
- 40 consequences of improper use.
- 41 4. The development and utilization of standardized specifications for pesticide containers
- 42 and equipment connectors for closed pesticide application systems.
- 43 5. Efforts to encourage farm equipment manufacturers and American Society of Agricultural
- 44 and Biological Engineers (ASABE) to work together to create an improved system for new
- 45 equipment that would better indicate turns, making them more noticeable for vehicles that
- 46 are approaching or following.
- 47

48
49 We will seek legislation to increase fines to at least \$75.00 to deter misuse of an SMV emblem

50 used to mark anything other than those vehicles required to display one. We also encourage law

51 enforcement to enforce this law.

52
53 We oppose licensing farm tractors and other implements of husbandry.

1 We will develop an SMV and lighting campaign to encourage farmers to update their older
2 equipment with new amber flashing lights and SMV emblems. This should be accomplished
3 through educational programs and materials presented by both state and county Farm Bureaus.
4 We oppose legislation which would forcibly require mandatory lighting on older farm equipment
5 other than what is currently required by law.
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9 **107. FENCE LAW**

10
11 We support the current fence law which provides for the equitable cost sharing of division fences
12 between adjoining landowners. When a piece of property is subdivided, it is the obligation of the
13 developer and subsequent owners to install and maintain a new line fence.
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17 **108. FIREARMS**

18
19 County Farm Bureaus should urge local law enforcement officials and local civic and public
20 service organizations to promote gun safety programs.
21

22 We support the Firearm Owners Identification Act and reasonable fees for Firearm Owners
23 Identification cards based on the administrative costs of the program.
24

25 We are opposed to any type of gun registration program or new, more stringent gun control laws.
26 Any new commitment in gun control should be made by the strict enforcement of current laws.
27

28 We support legislation requiring the State of Illinois to issue a permit to carry a concealed firearm
29 to qualified Illinois citizens through an appropriate application process.
30

31 We support current legislation that requires background checks and waiting periods for handgun
32 purchases.
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36 **109. ILLINOIS BANKING STRUCTURE**

37
38 We support a banking structure in Illinois that provides for:

- 39 1. An adequate supply of competitively priced credit for all credit worthy farmers.
- 40 2. Competent staff in local banks who understands agriculture and the unique risks with
41 which farmers must deal.
- 42 3. Fair competition for banks of all sizes and in all locales.
- 43 4. Fair competition with other types of lenders.
- 44 5. Economic decision making that is not concentrated in the hands of a few large financial
45 institutions.
- 46 6. Constant or a net inflow of capital into the area in which financial institutions are being
47 acquired, merged or consolidated.
- 48 7. Greater scrutiny of and investigation into anti-trust ramifications and violations in relation
49 to mergers and other acquisitions.
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1 **110. ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

2
3 We support:

- 4 1. Maintaining the Illinois Department of Agriculture as a stand-alone agency.
5 2. Strengthening the Illinois Department of Agriculture including its role in regulatory
6 concerns as they apply to agriculture.
7 3. Strengthening Illinois county fairs, the Illinois State Fair, and the DuQuoin State Fair as
8 agricultural expositions.
9 4. Encouraging the State of Illinois to fully fund its portion of premium dollars at Illinois county
10 fairs.

11
12
13 **111. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

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15
16 We support:

- 17 1. Expanded use of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act by units of local government.
18 2. The shared use of buildings, equipment, personnel and programs by units of local
19 government to reduce the cost to each unit.

20
21 County Farm Bureaus are encouraged to work with local government officials and other
22 interested parties to increase the level of cooperation among existing local governmental units.

23
24 We will work with all interested groups and organizations to identify methods which can be
25 implemented locally to encourage local government cooperation.

26
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29 **112. JUDICIAL REFORM**

30
31 We will support an amendment to the Illinois Constitution permitting downstate judicial districts to
32 choose by referendum between election of judges or appointment of judges from candidates
33 recommended by advisory commissions made up of laymen and lawyers.

34
35 We will work with members of the legal profession and legislative bodies on a state and national
36 level to substantially reform the judicial system by addressing issues such as tort reform, attorney
37 contingency fees, incompetent or unqualified judges, and lengthy trials.

38
39 We will support efforts to limit the tenure of judges at the local and state level.

40
41 We will support efforts to provide adequate information to the public regarding the qualifications
42 of individuals seeking election or retention to judicial office.

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46 **113. LAW AND ORDER**

47
48 We support action to:

- 49 1. Bring about firm, fair, and prompt enforcement of existing laws.
50 2. Increase enforcement of existing littering laws.
51 3. Provide aid to victims of crime.
52 4. Create greater awareness of and increased activity by our members in surfacing,
53 selection and election of qualified persons who will be capable of administering effective
54 law enforcement programs.
55

- 1 5. Require that the County Sheriff and State's Attorney be notified by the State Department
2 of Corrections when an inmate from their county is released from a state correctional
3 institution.
- 4 6. Reduce the fiscal impact imposed on local governments related to the increasing of
5 minimum federal jail standards. Such efforts should relate to providing state and local
6 government jurisdictions with flexibility to meet minimal care standards for such facilities.

7
8 We will support:

- 9 1. Effective enforcement of present laws and the enactment of new legislation where needed
10 to prevent the illegal production, importation, manufacture, or distribution of narcotics,
11 drugs, harmful substances, and related paraphernalia.
- 12 2. Work programs for prisoners.
- 13 3. Continued efforts to inform the victim of the impending release of an inmate.

14
15 We oppose the "early release program" as a solution to prison overcrowding.

16
17 We will seek legislation to provide for severe and mandatory sentences for crimes committed with
18 weapons. The defense of one's person or property with a weapon needs to be more clearly
19 defined legally.

20
21 We will:

- 22 1. Work with county Farm Bureaus in developing coalitions to address the problems with
23 methamphetamine production and use.
- 24 2. Encourage vigorous education efforts to inform youth, parents, and others concerning the
25 harmful effects of substance abuse including the dangers of methamphetamine production
26 and use.
- 27 3. Work with local, state, and federal officials in addressing the issue of methamphetamine
28 production and use.
- 29 4. Work with our urban legislators to help educate them on the severity of this problem in
30 rural areas and the cost to the taxpayer for treating methamphetamine addicts.
- 31 5. Encourage the research and development necessary to produce an economical additive
32 for anhydrous ammonia to prevent its use for the production of methamphetamine or other
33 illegal purposes.
- 34 6. Seek legislation imposing stiffer penalties for theft of anhydrous ammonia for
35 methamphetamine production.

36
37 We encourage counties to consider the establishment of Juvenile Justice Councils.

38 39 40 41 **114. LEGISLATIVE BODIES**

42
43 We will support:

- 44 1. Legislation prohibiting members of the General Assembly from receiving remuneration
45 from any taxing body for other than incidental services rendered on a part-time basis.
- 46 2. Legislation to provide for a "sunset" of all new state and federal programs which spend tax
47 resources.
- 48 3. Limiting the Governor's amendatory veto power to only technical corrections and matters
49 of form.
- 50 4. A restructuring of the Illinois legislative redistricting process that will be conducted by an
51 unbiased third party, will not be based on political affiliation and prior election results, and
52 districts will be compact, contiguous, and impartial to party or incumbency. Districts
53 should follow county, township, and municipal boundaries as much as possible.

1 **115. LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

2
3 We support the principle of strong local government and the assignment of responsibility for
4 government services to that unit of general government which is closest to the people and can
5 economically provide the service.
6

7 We will support legislation:

- 8 1. Providing uniform requirements, including the printed full name of the voter, for signers of
9 all public petitions.
- 10 2. Permitting consolidation of additional county functions between counties.
- 11 3. That ensures that any electronic registry of mortgage loan information shall not affect the
12 current system of recording documents affecting title to real property with the county clerk
13 or recorder.
- 14 4. Providing for salaries of all local officials to be set by the appropriate local unit, rather than
15 by the state legislature.
- 16 5. Requiring at least 15 percent of registered voters as signers on petitions within any
17 territory proposed to become a new taxing district or within any area proposed to be
18 annexed to an existing taxing district.
- 19 6. Requiring that a referendum to expand a taxing district be approved by a majority of voters
20 in both the existing district and in the area proposed to be annexed. When a new taxing
21 district is to be created encompassing both incorporated and unincorporated areas, the
22 referendum should require approval by voters within the incorporated area and a separate
23 approval by voters in the unincorporated area.
- 24 7. More clearly defining what issues are appropriate for non-binding advisory referenda for
25 units of local government.
26

27 We will seek legislation to provide for:

- 28 1. Selection of special district board members by election.
- 29 2. Disconnection from or dissolution of any special district by referendum.
- 30 3. Uniform fiscal years, classification of accounts, budgets and audits for all taxing bodies.
- 31 4. Additional authority for forest preserve districts to sell real estate, including farmland.
- 32 5. A referendum of registered voters in the township or townships to approve the site where
33 municipalities propose to annex property for the location of any type of waste disposal
34 facility, prison or other entity which could directly affect the lives of people residing in the
35 area.
- 36 6. The requirement that any municipality or any other unit of local government considering
37 annexation of farmland notify affected landowners by registered or certified mail at least
38 30 days prior to the filing of such annexation.
- 39 7. The capability of counties, townships, and special districts to levy impact fees to support
40 local services during the time between construction of a project and when tax revenues
41 would normally be received and to levy impact fees to support local infrastructure
42 improvements in areas of new development.
43

44 We support:

- 45 1. The shifting of additional responsibilities from the federal government to state
46 governments if, at the same time, adequate access is made to the tax structure to allow
47 for the financing of such programs by the states and a commensurate reduction is made in
48 federal taxes. We will support state and local governments in the development of their
49 capabilities to discharge these added responsibilities.
- 50 2. The shifting of responsibilities from the state government to local governments only if the
51 state government reduces its taxes proportionately or provides local governments the
52 resources to carry out such responsibilities.
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- 1 3. Improvements in state agency programs which provide needed training and education for
- 2 local government officials. Such programs should include management and financial
- 3 training related to local government.
- 4 4. The consolidation or combination of special taxing units or local government units and
- 5 programs where such consolidation or combination is planned and approved by local
- 6 initiative and referenda.
- 7 5. Efforts by local government officials, county Farm Bureaus and other organizations to
- 8 increase public participation in the overall functions of local government.
- 9 6. Efforts to ensure that citizens who do not currently live in a library district but wish to
- 10 receive library services can receive equal and affordable access to the public library
- 11 system.
- 12 7. Encouraging local governments to make compensation breakdowns and pension
- 13 sweeteners more readily available to public scrutiny.
- 14 8. Amending the Cemetery Oversight Act, so that the provisions of the law are not overly
- 15 burdensome for cemeteries.

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17 We will strongly oppose all efforts to mandate inclusion of areas not currently served by a library
18 district into existing library districts.

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22 **116. MANDATED PROGRAMS**

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We will oppose state and federal legislation mandating local programs, unless full funding for such programs is provided on a continuing basis.

We will support an amendment to the Illinois Constitution prohibiting the state from mandating programs on local governments and school districts without providing full state funding.

32 **117. PRIVATE LANDS COOPERATIVE INITIATIVE**

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We support development of state laws and policies promoting voluntary and incentive-based private land initiatives to:

- 36 1. Encourage economic stability in communities through long-term private land ownership.
- 37 2. Enhance on-farm income through recreation-based resource development.
- 38 3. Increase community revenue through expanded economic activity.
- 39 4. Improve public recreational opportunities on private land.
- 40 5. Provide liability protection to landowners.
- 41 6. Increase economic activity in depressed rural communities.
- 42 7. Promote cooperation between government bodies and private landowners.

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46 **118. PROBATE AND FAMILY LAWS**

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We will support:

- 49 1. Major reform of probate laws and procedures which will increase the promptness, reduce
- 50 the cost, and simplify the procedures for settling estates.
- 51 2. Revisions to family law that fairly recognize capital cost for purposes of determining net
- 52 farm income and include allowances for deduction of either depreciation or debt service.

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119. PUBLIC BUILDING ACTS

We will support legislation further limiting the use of the Illinois Building Authority Act and the Illinois Public Building Commission Act.

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120. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

We will work to inform our leaders and members of the basic provisions of the current public employee collective bargaining laws in Illinois.

We urge our leaders and members to use various innovative consensus and nonadversarial approaches to resolve public employee disputes to minimize the potential of work stoppages by public employees.

We will cooperate with major public employee and employer groups in the State in pursuit of reasonable solutions to disputes in the public sector.

We will support binding arbitration only when agreed to by both negotiating parties.

We will continue to oppose all laws which provide for:

- 23 1. Mandatory membership in any bargaining group, or mandatory financial support of such
24 group by non-members.
- 25 2. Strikes by public employees which might jeopardize public health, safety, welfare and
26 education.
- 27 3. Inclusion of administrative, supervisory or management personnel in a collective
28 bargaining unit.

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121. SPECIAL SERVICE AREAS

We will seek legislation to amend the Special Service Area Law to permit, by petition of at least 10 percent of the voters in the proposed area, the calling of a binding referendum to determine if a special service area shall be established, if taxes are to be extended, or if certain areas are to be included in the service area.

We will support legislation:

- 40 1. To ensure that special service areas be restricted to providing those services that are not
41 ordinarily provided by county government.
- 42 2. Which provides procedures for the dissolution of special service areas.
- 43 3. Which provides that only counties may establish and govern any special service area
44 which includes territory not incorporated within a municipality.

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122. TORT REFORM AND INSURANCE LIABILITY

We support:

- 51 1. Coordination of efforts between state and county Farm Bureaus, medical associations,
52 insurance organizations, and other organizations for solving the increasing problems of
53 cost and availability of liability insurance.

- 1 2. Efforts to reduce the costs of product liability insurance and other important classes of
- 2 liability insurance. Reduction of these costs will benefit the ultimate consumers.
- 3 3. Legislation to help protect landowners and tenants from liability claims made by
- 4 trespassers or licensees coming upon the landowners' property.
- 5 4. Limitations upon an attorney's contingency fee.
- 6 5. Modification of the law on joint and several liability and comparative negligence to prevent
- 7 inequitable division of compensation from defendants.
- 8 6. Removal of the authority of local units of government to use profits generated from tax-
- 9 created liability protection funds for other purposes.
- 10 7. Development of informational programs to educate our membership and the public
- 11 regarding issues relating to tort reform and the insurance liability crisis.
- 12 8. Laws or regulations absolving farmers from liability claims of environmental pollution:
- 13 A. When complying with federal or state approved label instructions.
- 14 B. When building, managing, or operating livestock facilities according to federal or
- 15 state guidelines such as the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) and the
- 16 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) rules.
- 17 9. Legislation at the state and federal level to place reasonable limitations on attorney's fees
- 18 generated by class action lawsuits.
- 19 10. Efforts to limit punitive damages in odor lawsuits.
- 20 11. An amendment to the Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act in order to limit the
- 21 liability of landowners who voluntarily open their land for educational and recreational
- 22 activities at no charge while maintaining the landowner's ability to determine who to allow
- 23 on their property.
- 24 12. Legislation that would encourage liability litigation to be filed and commenced in the
- 25 jurisdiction where the medical service was provided.
- 26 13. The expansion of the restitution language that will allow the recovery of both out-of-pocket
- 27 expenses and lost wages.
- 28 14. Requiring the cost of defense to be paid by the complaining or suing parties and their
- 29 representatives in the event the defendant prevails.
- 30

31 We will support at the state and federal level and will urge the American Farm Bureau Federation
32 to support a "Voluntarism Protection Act" to grant immunity from personal civil liability under
33 certain circumstances to volunteers, officers and directors working in behalf of non-profit and
34 charitable organizations and government.

35
36 We will seek legislation to require the payment by the plaintiff or plaintiffs of costs and reasonable
37 attorney fees incurred by a prevailing defendant in any nuisance action in which a proposed farm
38 (as defined in the Farm Nuisance Suit Act) or expansion of an existing farm which is alleged to be
39 a nuisance.

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43 **123. TRESPASS, VANDALISM, AND PRIVATE LAND ACCESS**

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We will support:

- 46 1. Encouraging courts to punish vandals by requiring them to clean up and repair their own
- 47 vandalism at their own expense or perform some other constructive work. We urge
- 48 judges, when setting sentences, to require reimbursement of Crime Stoppers or similar
- 49 reward programs, as a part of the sentence.
- 50 2. Legislation to protect landowners and tenants from property seizures, claims, and costs
- 51 caused by unauthorized activities of trespassers and licensees entering upon and using
- 52 the landowners' property.
- 53 3. Efforts, including legislation and working with law enforcement agencies and prosecutors,
- 54 to increase the enforcement of criminal trespass laws.
- 55

4. Legislation specifying that, in criminal damage to property cases where the damage was caused by the unauthorized operation of a vehicle on private property, the threshold of felony status be elevated from its current \$300 to a level better suited to the crime and one that would help to remove the law enforcement community's hesitancy to prosecute those violators. In such cases, a minimum fine should be established with required restitution to the victim for property damages caused and the violator's license should be suspended for six months.
5. Legislation linking criminal violations of the Illinois Vehicle Code and acts of criminal trespass or criminal damage to property to the driver's license record of anyone convicted of these crimes for the unauthorized operation of a motor vehicle on private property.
6. Legislation creating an owner responsibility provision in law that obligates the owner of a vehicle to compensate for damages caused to private property by the use of the vehicle on that property without the landowner's authorization unless the vehicle was stolen or the vehicle's owner took reasonable precautions against misuse of the vehicle.
7. Efforts to educate law enforcement officials and the general public – especially youth – about the property damage caused by the unauthorized operation of vehicles on private property and the liability and penalties for any resulting property damage.
8. The development and dissemination of programs and materials on private property rights and the associated portions of trespass and criminal law. We encourage county Farm Bureaus to pursue similar efforts on the local level.
9. Efforts to educate farmland owners and farmland operators about their legal rights and responsibilities relating to trespass; also, efforts to educate them about insurance coverage relating to liability and property damage caused through trespass. We encourage county Farm Bureaus to pursue similar efforts on the local level.
10. Efforts to establish riding areas for ATVs and other off-highway vehicles and efforts to generate revenues for that purpose from those who use the vehicles for recreation.
11. Efforts to make it clear that persons going to or from rivers, streams, and bike trails over another's land or hunting on another's land without the owner's or rightful occupant's specific permission, without regard to the presence of any posted notices, are trespassers for the purposes of determining liability of a landowner for any injury which might occur to the trespasser.
12. Legislation that will require owners of recreational trails and their facilities to compensate owners of land adjacent to the trail or facility for any property damage, theft, littering, and/or vandalism caused by users of the trail or facility except where the actual perpetrator can be identified and make restitution.
13. Efforts to educate farm owners and operators about their legal rights as they pertain to utilities and governmental or private surveying companies. We would encourage all surveyors to notify affected landowners and use public property whenever possible.

We will seek legislation that would make it a criminal trespass offense to enter upon and damage another's property without regard to the presence of any posted notices or prior notification.

124. FEDERAL ESTATE TAXES

We will support:

1. The repeal of federal estate taxes while still retaining a stepped up basis at the time of inheritance.
2. The exemption from federal estate taxes for heirs who are actively farming a farm property which is restricted by a voluntary conservation easement.
3. Elimination of the \$850,000 ceiling and limitation on the percentage of the total value of the estate allowed in determining the existing exemption under Internal Revenue Code 2032-A for agricultural productive value.

1 4. Increasing the maximum gift tax exclusion per recipient to \$50,000 per year.

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We oppose any reduction in the current federal estate tax exemption. Until repeal becomes politically feasible, we support an increase in the exemption to \$10 million to ease the movement of farms and small businesses from one generation to the next. The exemption should be indexed for inflation.

10 **125. PROPERTY TAX ADMINISTRATION**

11
12 We will seek legislation allowing by local referendum the dissolution of consolidated township assessing districts.

13
14
15 We will support legislation to improve the administration of local assessments including:

- 16 1. Provisions to specifically define property as real estate or personal property on an equitable basis statewide. We will continue to work with the State Department of Revenue (DOR) and local assessing officials on specific problems in this regard.
- 17 2. A change in the method of valuing mobile or manufactured homes for assessment and collection of taxes from the Mobile Home Local Services Tax Act (privilege tax) to an Ad Valorem Tax (measured by value).
- 18 3. Reducing the costly printing of quadrennial assessments by replacing it with a block advertisement.

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25 We will seek uniform and equitable implementation of the Farmland Assessment Law, in cooperation with county Farm Bureaus.

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28 We will:

- 29 1. Work with county Farm Bureaus to inform members of the limits of their responsibilities in providing information to assessing officials.
- 30 2. Continue to cooperate with the DOR and the Association of Assessing Officials in developing educational materials for use by taxpayer groups.
- 31 3. Strongly urge the members of the Illinois General Assembly not to change the present formula for calculating the assessed value of farmland.
- 32 4. Support the appointment of Supervisors of Assessment versus elected Supervisors of Assessment.
- 33 5. Encourage county Farm Bureaus, in cooperation with local officials, to periodically hold information/education meetings for taxpayers.
- 34 6. Work with the DOR and the Association of Assessing Officials to achieve uniformity in depreciation (for assessment purposes) of all depreciable agricultural facilities.
- 35 7. Work with the Illinois DOR and the Association of Assessing Officials to encourage the assessment of all qualifying agricultural property, regardless of size, under the farmland assessment law.
- 36 8. Work with appropriate state agencies and other state officials to develop Conservation Management Plan rules that permit landowners to apply for a plan without submitting overly burdensome and prohibitive proposals.

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48 We oppose legislation removing either the State DOR or the local Board of Review from the administrative process of approving or denying property tax exemptions. The DOR should continue to have final authority.

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1 **126. SALES TAX**

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3 We will seek legislation to:

- 4 1. Remove the Retailer's Occupation Tax (ROT) and the Use Tax from sales of LP gas used
- 5 primarily in production agriculture.
- 6 2. Remove the ROT and the Use Tax from sales of feeds, including hay when sold by
- 7 farmers to feed livestock including horses and poultry for marketing, or for producing dairy
- 8 products or eggs or other consumer by-products.
- 9 3. Eliminate the practice of charging state sales tax on motor fuel.

10
11 We support agricultural exemptions in Illinois state sales tax codes.

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14 **127. STATE AND LOCAL FINANCE**

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16
17 The overall tax structure for state and local governments in Illinois should include a state income
18 tax, a moderate local real property tax, sales tax, motor fuel tax, cigarette tax, liquor tax and other
19 special taxes.

20
21 We will analyze any proposed increase in the state sales tax rate as to the effect such an
22 increase would have on the economy and competitiveness of the State of Illinois in relation to the
23 sales tax rates imposed by neighboring states and take the appropriate action on such proposed
24 increase.

25
26 We will support legislation:

- 27 1. Providing property tax relief through a combination of state revenue surpluses and various
- 28 state-wide taxes.
- 29 2. Including townships and road districts along with counties and municipalities in the
- 30 formula for the distribution of the Local Government Distributive Fund.
- 31 3. Extending to two years the time landowners have to disconnect their property from any
- 32 special purpose taxing district formed or expanded without a referendum and which does
- 33 not provide emergency life-sustaining services. During that period, all property tax
- 34 revenues collected by the district from landowners within the new taxing area should be
- 35 held in escrow and refunded or credited to those taxpayers if they choose, by referendum,
- 36 to disconnect.
- 37 4. Extending the time limit from 30 days to 60 days to get 10 percent of registered voters'
- 38 signatures on petitions concerning backdoor referendums.
- 39 5. Providing for restricted and specific criteria in order to qualify areas for creation of Tax
- 40 Increment Financing districts (TIFs) by municipalities and counties in order to reduce
- 41 negative fiscal impacts on existing businesses and local governments, including schools.
- 42 Further, we believe the economic advantages of the new business or production alone
- 43 should be enough to justify expansion or location in an area.
- 44 6. Limiting the tort immunity levies to the actual costs incurred by the local taxing bodies.
- 45 We support vigorous enforcement of current laws and regulations specifying use of these
- 46 funds.
- 47 7. Allowing local citizens to establish a maximum tax rate lower than the statutory maximum
- 48 rate when creating a new taxing district by referendum.
- 49 8. That requires a referendum ballot question which proposes the creation of a new taxing
- 50 body also state the statutory maximum tax rate and debt level for the proposed new taxing
- 51 district.
- 52 9. Allowing a Fire Protection District to retain the real estate taxes for a period of 10 years,
- 53 whenever a territory is disconnected from a Fire Protection District and annexed to a
- 54 municipality.
- 55

- 1 10. Providing that taxing districts shall give public notice of, and hold a public hearing on, their
2 intent to annex property.
- 3 11. Limiting taxing districts, including school districts, from incurring future bonded
4 indebtedness, without a referendum, where such bonds are to be repaid with property tax
5 revenue.
- 6 12. To require referendums which authorize any new real estate tax levy to state the
7 maximum statutory tax rate in the referendum question.
- 8 13. To allow all taxing bodies to reduce their levy after the levy has been submitted to the
9 county clerk.
- 10 14. To allow impact fees to be imposed on new residential construction for school capital
11 needs.
- 12 15. To allow townships that are currently under the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)
13 program to opt out.
- 14 16. To exempt undeveloped farmland in unincorporated areas from municipal local
15 improvement taxes and fees.
- 16 17. To eliminate the four percent tax on timber sales since the money is not being used for its
17 intended purpose.
- 18 18. Requiring that any tax credits be based on fiscal policy that promotes long-term economic
19 stability and prosperity.
- 20 19. To amend the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Act to allow some of the
21 revenues funding the act to be used to provide maintenance and improvement to existing
22 state parks.
- 23 20. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to require school districts to issue a
24 public statement of intent a minimum of 30 days prior to the election.
- 25 21. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to ensure that counties benefiting
26 from the School Facility Tax Act would not be prevented from, or placed at a disadvantage
27 for, receiving school construction dollars from the state.
- 28 22. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to require that a portion of the money
29 collected is used in property tax relief if the school district(s) has outstanding bonds for
30 capital purposes.
- 31 23. Amending the Illinois County School Facility Tax Act to require a sunset clause of 20
32 years or re-approval by voters to continue the tax.
- 33 24. Requiring local governments to publicly disclose information on tax increment financing
34 districts including the locations of the districts, funds generated, use of funds, and any
35 contractors.
- 36 25. That calls for a more stringent audit of all state expenditures.

37

38 We will seek legislation:

- 39 1. Prohibiting extension of real estate taxes on farmland by special taxing districts which
40 provide non-essential services such as library districts, park districts, and forest preserve
41 districts.
- 42 2. To change the back door referendum to a front door referendum in the library code that
43 relates to annexation of contiguous territory.

44

45 We will work to form a coalition of statewide associations and other interested and like-minded
46 parties to work for tax reform to reduce the reliance on real estate taxes.

47

48 We will oppose legislation:

- 49 1. Creating a State of Illinois Estate Tax without an allowable exemption of \$10 million
50 indexed for inflation with stepped-up basis retention.
- 51 2. Imposing additional taxes or increases in tax rates upon property unless approved by a
52 referendum of local voters at a primary or general election. We oppose the use of a
53 backdoor referendum.
- 54 3. Imposing a state property tax.

55

- 1 4. Increasing exemptions from real estate taxation.
- 2 5. That allows the use of Tax Increment Financing or enterprise zones for production
- 3 agriculture.
- 4 6. Authorizing non-refundable fund transfers beyond those allowed in the standard budgeting
- 5 process or via voter approval.
- 6 7. Creating a gross receipts tax or value-added tax by the State of Illinois.
- 7 8. Selling or leasing the Illinois State Lottery.
- 8 9. Authorizing the transfer of funds from dedicated and special state funds for any reason
- 9 beyond their original intended purpose.

10
11 We will oppose a constitutional amendment to remove or permit removal of the present 8 to 5
12 state income tax ratio between corporations and individuals.

13
14 We urge county Farm Bureaus to implement comprehensive local programs to determine and to
15 critically evaluate how and from what sources local government revenues are being raised and
16 how these funds are being spent. We will assist county Farm Bureaus in such programs.

17
18 We encourage the Illinois General Assembly to undergo a more comprehensive and diligent
19 method of prioritizing appropriations to meet the current needs of its citizens.

20
21 We support speeding up tax appeal decisions that affect local government budgets.

22
23 We believe the state of Illinois should meet its responsibilities in regards to funding those
24 organizations and programs for which funds have been appropriated in the state budget.

25 26 27 28 **128. STATE INCOME TAX**

29
30 We prefer a flat rate state income tax, and support deductions and credits benefiting agriculture
31 and agricultural processes, and an exemption at some realistic level.

32
33 We support the State of Illinois following Federal Depreciation rules regarding bonus depreciation.

34 35 36 37 **129. TAX REFORM**

38
39 Higher federal marginal income tax rates are inconsistent with economic growth and lower
40 interest rates. We support continued retention of the indexing of income taxes.

41
42 We will seek:

- 43 1. A reasonable Investment Tax Credit program and provision for the use of all carryover
- 44 investment tax credits.
- 45 2. Immediate provisions to allow individuals who purchase their own health insurance an
- 46 exemption or deduction for health insurance costs.
- 47 3. Further reductions in capital gains tax and/or indexing capital gains tax for inflation.
- 48 4. Establishment of a "Farmer Savings Plan" (FSP) that allows for an allocation of income
- 49 into a tax exempt FSP for emergencies. Plan contributions should include earnings and
- 50 gains from a farm operation's proceeds and capital items. Contributions should be tax
- 51 deductible at the time of contribution and be taxed at the time of distribution.
- 52 5. An exemption allowing the cash rental of farmland to a family partnership or corporation
- 53 without the 15.3 percent self-employment tax on the rents.
- 54
- 55

- 1 6. A modification of federal tax code 1031 like-kind exchanges that:
 - 2 A. Relaxes the requirements on the reinvestment of the proceeds from agricultural
 - 3 land sales.
 - 4 B. Changes from 45 days to six months the time allowed to identify a non-taxable
 - 5 exchange, and from six months to one year the time allowed to close and receive
 - 6 property.
- 7 7. Tax incentives for persons who sell or lease property, including but not limited to land,
- 8 machinery, and other farm assets to beginning farmers.
- 9 8. Legislation which eliminates self-employment tax on Conservation Reserve Program
- 10 (CRP) payments.

11
12 We will support the repeal of the amendments made to the 1099 IRS reporting in the Patient
13 Protection and Affordable Care Act.

14
15 Farmland taken through eminent domain, or as a result of the threat of eminent domain, which
16 has been owned by the current owner or his immediate family for 10 or more consecutive years
17 should be exempt from capital gains taxes on that property.

18
19 We oppose any tax and/or government-imposed user fee on commodity futures or options
20 transactions.

21
22 We support the investigation and complete study of a federal flat rate income tax proposal to
23 show its possible long-term effects on production agriculture.

24
25 We support the extension of the Federal Bonus Depreciation component of the Job Creation and
26 Worker Assistance Act of 2002.

27 28 29 30 **130. TRANSPORTATION**

31
32 We support development of a long-range national transportation policy that views transportation
33 as a holistic system serving the needs of both passengers and freight across all modes and
34 recognizes the importance of connectivity between modes. It should encourage exploration of
35 public/private partnerships and be designed to support global competitiveness while developing
36 the most economical and energy efficient methods of meeting future transportation needs.

37 38 **Land Use**

39 We will support:

- 40 1. Regulations which:
 - 41 A. Provide improved noxious weed and brush control by state and local road authorities
 - 42 on the full width of highway rights-of-way.
 - 43 B. Maintain safe levels of visibility.
 - 44 C. Protect farmers' crops from unwarranted or careless spraying.
 - 45 D. Ensure that ditch and roadside vegetation maintenance practices do not impair
 - 46 drainage to or from adjoining farm fields.
 - 47 E. Preserve vegetative cover adequate to prevent soil erosion on roadsides and in
 - 48 ditches.
- 49 2. Enforcement of noxious weed and brush control by railroad authorities on railroad rights-
50 of-way, including the use of a soil conserving cover crop whether the railroad is in
51 operation or abandoned.
- 52 3. Giving counties the power to levy a fine of \$500 per acre of railroad rights-of-way where
53 noxious weeds are not eradicated or controlled.
- 54 4. Enforcement of drainage laws and regulations on railroad rights-of-way.

55

5. Oversight of railroad construction projects and design standards by appropriate government agencies to minimize disturbance to adjoining farmland and farming operations and to adequately protect or repair drainage and drainage systems.
6. Efforts to ensure that highway construction and improvement projects do not cause serious, adverse impact to drainage nor cause erosion on adjacent land.
7. Utilization of marginal farmland or poorer grades of land for new railroad construction projects where feasible in order to preserve tillable farmland.
8. Utilization of existing rights-of-way for new highways to the maximum extent feasible in order to minimize acquisition of new lands for highway purposes.
9. Efforts that provide for utilization of marginal or poorer grades of farmland for new highway projects where feasible in order to preserve tillable farmland.
10. More equitable compensation to landowners for disruption of farming operations by highway construction.

Other

We support efficient mass transportation. We will support legislation or regulations to allow disconnection of counties by referendum from mass transportation authorities.

We encourage the use of biodiesel and ethanol by mass transit systems.

We support efforts to streamline the transportation project delivery process to reduce unnecessary time delays including:

1. Simplifying the environmental process for projects with few impacts.
2. Involving appropriate reviewing agencies early in the process to help expedite overall project schedules.
3. Requiring greater coordination among federal reviewing agencies and setting time limits for their review.

We support efforts to educate policy makers and the public to ensure they understand:

1. The value and necessity of efficient and effective transportation infrastructure.
2. The complexity and cost of both long-term maintenance and expansion of transportation infrastructure to meet future needs.
3. The importance of interconnectivity between modes.

131. TRANSPORTATION -- HIGHWAYS

Finance

We will support:

1. Legislation which provides that user fees such as motor fuel taxes, licensing and registration fees are the basic means for funding highway transportation systems in Illinois at both state and local levels.
2. The increase of State of Illinois motor fuel tax by up to 10 cents per gallon. The current distribution formula should be left intact.
3. Legislation to increase the share of state-collected highway user fees allocated to units of local government for road and bridge construction and maintenance needs.
4. Legislation increasing the state's township bridge program fund to at least \$30 million annually.
5. Legislation providing for a more equitable formula for allocating motor fuel tax funds to counties based on both vehicle registration and road mileage.
6. Use of all highway user fees including that part of motor fuel tax funds derived from highway use solely for construction and maintenance of roads, streets, and bridges.

- 1 7. Legislation permitting establishment of transportation impact districts by road districts and
2 counties.
- 3 8. Repeal of current Illinois Department of Transportation requirements stipulating that
4 contractors must have federally approved apprenticeship and training programs to be
5 considered a responsible bidder for road projects.
- 6 9. Legislation to prevent the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority from constructing any new
7 toll highways or extending any existing toll highways unless state law is changed to allow
8 for strict accountability to the Illinois General Assembly.

9
10 We will seek legislation that holds the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority accountable and
11 responsible for the repair and maintenance of all overpass decks that are the result of tollway
12 construction.

13
14 We believe Illinois highways currently funded by tolls should remain as toll roads.

15
16 We will oppose:

- 17 1. Legislation which would abolish motor fuel tax refunds for non-highway use.
- 18 2. Mandatory bike paths on rural roads without adequate state funding.
- 19 3. The sale or lease of any Illinois highway system.
- 20 4. Formation of any new toll highway authority in Illinois unless existing state law is changed
21 to allow for strict accountability to the Illinois General Assembly.
- 22 5. Selling or leasing of Illinois' toll highways.

23 24 **Infrastructure**

25 We will support:

- 26 1. Proper administrative authorities in the development of standards for the construction of
27 local roads and bridges that correspond with the physical needs of the highway system
28 and the economic ability of local authorities to pay for them.
- 29 2. The use of weight limit postings and associated permits only for the purpose of protecting
30 the physical integrity of the road.
- 31 3. Legislation requiring weight limit postings intended to protect roadway surfaces be based
32 on a per-axle limit rather than on a gross vehicle weight limit.
- 33 4. Greater emphasis on maintenance and improvement of existing state highways with
34 reduced emphasis on new expressways and interstates.
- 35 5. An approach to funding the replacement and/or maintenance of roads and bridges by the
36 Illinois Department of Transportation through improved consultation with the local highway
37 officials and the public as to the necessity of each project considered.

38 39 **Access**

40 We will support:

- 41 1. Legislation that would allow local road authorities to issue an overweight permit for
42 divisible loads on agricultural products.
- 43 2. Legislation that would ensure the continuity of local collector road systems by requiring
44 those routes be continuous, regardless of jurisdiction, between logical beginning and
45 ending points such as county or state highways or major traffic generating facilities, or that
46 a reasonable, viable alternate route be made available.
- 47 3. Funding to assist in upgrading highways that retain business traffic through rural
48 communities (where locally desired) while improving safety and traffic flow.
- 49 4. Requiring all road authorities that seek to make any change to an existing road, that will
50 result in establishment of a lower weight limit, to develop a plan for ingress and egress to
51 existing livestock and other agricultural facilities that have an established access to that
52 roadway. The plan must be functional, economically feasible, and reasonable with
53 agreement by both parties.

54
55

1 We will seek legislation allowing local jurisdictions, at their discretion, to permit the movement of
2 vehicles hauling for production agriculture which exceed size or weight limits on posted roads
3 where necessity dictates the need for the shipment to or from a specified farm.

4
5 **Other**

6 We will support:

- 7 1. Legislation permitting temporary signs within a reasonable distance of federal and state
8 highways, other than interstates, directing traffic to seasonal farm produce outlets.
9 2. Legislation establishing an adopt-a-highway program for rural sections of all roads in the
10 state.

11
12 We encourage:

- 13 1. Research to make corn-based calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) cost effective and
14 viable as a road de-icing agent and we encourage its use by highway authorities.
15 2. The inclusion of environmental concerns as well as damage to road surfaces, bridges and
16 vehicles as a part of overall cost considerations when comparing salt to CMA as a de-
17 icing agent.
18 3. Road maintenance officials to offer landowners/land managers/operators the chance to
19 accept or refuse soil removed from adjacent road ditches.
20 4. State and local highway officials to provide farm and field entrances that accommodate
21 the needs of modern agriculture. This includes encouraging state, county, and township
22 highway departments to use a plastic, bendable marker post instead of metal posts where
23 object markers are used.
24 5. The Illinois Department of Transportation to assume ownership and responsibility of the
25 New Harmony Bridge, a vital crossing over the Wabash River in White County, and to
26 provide Illinois' share of the funding to make the necessary repairs to keep the bridge in
27 permanent operation.
28
29
30

31 **132. TRANSPORTATION -- RAILWAYS**

32
33 **Finance**

34 We support:

- 35 1. Strengthening of existing state laws so the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) can deal
36 effectively with unfair rent increases imposed by railroads upon their tenants, and
37 unrealistic sale prices for land offered by the railroads to tenants or other prospective
38 buyers of railroad property.
39 2. Legislation requiring full disclosure of the railroad grain transportation bidding process to
40 the individuals who participate in the process after all bids have been made and rail cars
41 have been allocated.
42

43 We oppose diversion of railroad earnings to holding companies or non-railroad businesses at the
44 expense of maintaining a viable railroad.
45

46 **Infrastructure**

47 We support efforts to have more at-grade highway/railroad crossings signalized with warning
48 lights and gates. Where closure of the crossing would impose undue hardships on users of the
49 road, greater flexibility should be shown by the ICC on safety considerations. Efforts should be
50 made to ensure that the ICC considers accident history and emergency access along with other
51 locally important issues in decisions on petitions to close railroad crossings.
52

53 We encourage railroads to give advance notice of construction intentions to local residents and
54 local government bodies prior to taking formal action on permit applications.
55

1 We oppose parallel branch line mergers of rail systems and the granting of railroad
2 abandonments which tend to lessen overall transportation competition or where there is or could
3 be proven traffic potential.

4 5 **Land Use**

6 We support legislation and regulations to provide that in the case of a railroad abandonment, the
7 current owner of the tract of land from which the railroad right-of-way was obtained be given the
8 right of first refusal for such land, including mineral rights, based upon the fair market value for
9 comparable property rights in the area. If the current owner fails to exercise such option, the
10 adjacent landowners will be offered the next right of refusal.

11 12 **Access**

13 We support:

- 14 1. Expedient placement of "exempt" postings at public road crossings on railroads which are
15 abandoned.
- 16 2. A requirement that a notice of proposed crossing closure be posted at crossings 30 days
17 in advance of a hearing to consider closure of the crossing.
- 18 3. Oversight by the ICC of median barriers and crossing safety devices placed in the
19 approach to grade crossings which prohibit and/or hinder the flow of agricultural
20 equipment through grade crossings.
- 21 4. Legislation that will allow the Surface Transportation Board, on petition of a state, to
22 declare all or part of a state to be an area of inadequate rail competition, with special rail
23 customer remedies that would apply in such areas.

24 25 **Other**

26 We support:

- 27 1. Giving authority to the state to force a railroad to temporarily cease operations on a given
28 stretch of track due to emergency conditions.
- 29 2. Maintaining state oversight of railroads under the purview of the ICC.

30
31 We will:

- 32 1. Work with the railroad industry and the ICC to establish regulations that require parked
33 trains to maintain a 500-foot distance from ungated and/or unsignaled at-grade crossings
34 in unincorporated areas to provide safe visibility for motorists. Trains parked at
35 businesses should be exempt from this requirement when it is necessary while loading or
36 unloading, but still maintain the maximum setback distance possible.
- 37 2. Meet with railroad officials to determine ways to improve rail service to agriculture across
38 Illinois.
- 39 3. Encourage rail passenger services to maintain or improve service and increase efforts to
40 become self-sufficient.
- 41 4. Continue to monitor high speed rail projects. We will oppose the implementation of these
42 projects unless the following conditions are included:
 - 43 A. Safe and convenient public access is provided across the railroad.
 - 44 B. Owners of private crossings are provided continued access.
 - 45 C. Landowners are fairly compensated for any takings associated with the project.

46 47 48 49 **133. TRANSPORTATION -- VEHICLE REGULATIONS**

50 51 **Vehicles**

52 We will support:

- 53 1. Redefinition of "commercial motor vehicle" from the 10,001 pound threshold to that used
54 for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program – 26,001 pounds.

- 1 2. Legislation to reduce the requirement for semi-annual truck safety inspections to an
- 2 annual inspection.
- 3 3. Legislation to require recreational motor vehicles and recreational trailers to pass a safety
- 4 inspection on the same basis as trucks and trailers.
- 5 4. Legislation permitting second division vehicles with expired safety test decals to be driven
- 6 to a repair facility and to a safety test lane.
- 7 5. Efforts to develop regulations which encourage the establishment of more truck safety test
- 8 lanes in the state.
- 9 6. Legislation that would allow annual reporting of mileage on mileage plates.
- 10 7. Legislation to remove the requirement to post a bond to purchase a mileage plate.
- 11 8. Proration of renewal fees for farm truck and trailer plates based on the month of
- 12 application.
- 13 9. Legislation establishing uniform maximum weights for all truck and trailer license plate
- 14 classifications that share the same letter designation.
- 15 10. Regulation establishing uniform release mechanisms on all seat belts on newly
- 16 manufactured vehicles.
- 17 11. Legislation to expand the applicability of the harvest season permit to include perishable
- 18 produce.
- 19 12. Legislation to establish higher weight limits for farm wagons and non-licensed trailers.

20
21 We will seek legislation to:

- 22 1. Require that trailers submit to safety test inspections at the same weight classification as
- 23 required for trucks.
- 24 2. Establish a low mileage license for trucks with a reduced number of allowable miles and a
- 25 commensurate reduction in fee.
- 26 3. Decrease the cost of a "farm" truck plate until that cost falls at or below 50 percent of the
- 27 cost of a flat weight plate.
- 28 4. Require all rural mail delivery vehicles to have flashing yellow lights on top of the vehicle
- 29 and a sign on the rear of the vehicle reading "U.S. Postal Service Mail Carrier."
- 30 5. Establish uniform truck and trailer lengths on Class III routes, other state highways, local
- 31 roads, and streets.

32 33 **Drivers**

34 We will support:

- 35 1. Enhanced driver education related to slow moving vehicles, large trucks, horses, and
- 36 horse drawn vehicles.
- 37 2. Limiting the need for bi-annual Department of Transportation (DOT) driver physicals to
- 38 only those drivers required to have a CDL.

39
40 We will seek legislation to allow a CDL applicant to have a checklist with them during the pre-trip

41 inspection portion of the CDL testing process.

42 43 **Government Oversight**

44 We will support:

- 45 1. Efforts to bring about greater uniformity and reciprocity among states on regulations
- 46 affecting trucks and truck operators.
- 47 2. Efforts to ensure uniform interpretation and application of motor vehicle regulations by all
- 48 government administrative and enforcement personnel.
- 49 3. Efforts to clarify and simplify the Vehicle Code and regulations relating to farm trucks and
- 50 trailers.
- 51 4. Encouragement of the Division of Motor Vehicles to accept truck license plate renewals at
- 52 all driver services facilities.
- 53 5. Efforts to have the County Engineer's office act as a clearing house for overweight and
- 54 over dimension permits on all county and road district roads.

- 1 6. Having more Commercial Drivers License testing facilities be made available in the state
2 for written and driving examinations.

3
4 All State of Illinois drivers licensing facilities should be capable of issuing stickers and permits.
5

6 We will seek legislation to:

- 7 1. Allow alternative means of posting bond, such as credit cards, for traffic and weight
8 violations by all drivers licensed in the State of Illinois.
- 9 2. Permit second division vehicles, designed for pulling or carrying freight or cargo, that are
10 visibly empty to forego the procedure of weighing at the scales in order to reduce truck
11 traffic congestion at weigh stations.
- 12 3. Recognize vehicle license registered weight rate, rather than the vehicle manufacturer's
13 gross vehicle weight rating, to determine the eligibility of any vehicle for the purpose of the
14 driver skills test to acquire a driver's license.

15
16 **Other**

17 We will support:

- 18 1. The establishment of a state agency/transportation industry group designed as a
19 coordinating mechanism to resolve problems associated with the regulation of motor
20 vehicles.
- 21 2. Allowing anhydrous ammonia to be transferred from a cargo tank motor vehicle with a
22 maximum capacity of 12,000 gallons into containers of 3,000 gallons capacity or less
23 mounted on farm vehicles or into containers of 6,000 gallons mounted on motor-driven
24 applicators provided that the cargo tank motor vehicle has been converted to proper
25 industry standards and engineered and regulated equipment.

26
27 We urge local law enforcement officials and local civic and public service organizations to
28 promote all terrain vehicle safety programs.

29
30 We will seek legislation to:

- 31 1. Establish a notification procedure that would provide property owners with the necessary
32 information to identify vehicles that are towed from their property.
- 33 2. Exempt transportation of agricultural products from farm to market from USDOT number
34 and UCR registration.

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