

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE COUNCIL
OF FARM ORGANIZATIONS**

**2006 RESOLUTIONS
as amended February 6, 2006**

**PA STATE COUNCIL OF FARM ORGANIZATIONS
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**PENNSYLVANIA STATE
COUNCIL OF FARM ORGANIZATIONS
2006**

STATE RESOLUTIONS

ANIMAL AND PRODUCTION ISSUES

ANIMAL HEALTH

WHEREAS, if Pennsylvania's agriculture is to continue to be the number one industry in the commonwealth and if it is going to continue to expand, the animal component must continue to grow and become even more efficient;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that to achieve this growth we need to find predictable sources of revenue so that increased funding can be dedicated to the Animal Health Commission, thereby allowing them to adequately fund their diagnostic programs, field investigation into animal disease outbreaks and research on animal health and disease; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the sufficient predictable funds should also be made available to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, PA State College of Agricultural Sciences, Delaware Valley College and other research institutions so that they can continue their long-term research in the production and profitability of animal operations; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that further sufficient predictable funding should be made available to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, PA State College of Agricultural Sciences and other research institutions for genetic research. We should consider the establishment of a Center in molecular genetics within the School of Veterinary Medicine, expand their considerable work in caring for companion animals, continue their collaboration between the University of Pennsylvania's Medical School in the relationships of human and animal health, and provide secure sufficient funding so that tuition for the students in this world renowned institution can be reduced to a level that is competitive with other veterinary schools so that we can attract the best of the best students.

ANIMAL WELFARE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations stresses educating the public on accepted animal husbandry practices and the benefits of these practices to consumers; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: the Council opposes any law or regulations that would hinder proper animal husbandry practices; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that research projects be conducted by the Department of Agriculture to produce facts to determine if stress affects animal health and that these results not be published until proven and complete; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that no public money be used to advance animal rights causes; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that if humane treatment of animals is taught in schools, the Program should include an explanation of accepted animal husbandry techniques and the value to the general public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that owners of household animals not be legally entitled to non-economic damages (such as pain and suffering, mental anguish or loss of companionship) for loss of or injury to the animal as a result of another's negligence or breach of legal duty.

CAPTIVE BORN ANIMALS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the PA State Council of Farm Organizations support regulation by the PA Department of Agriculture of all animals bred and raised for sale or consumption.

DEER DAMAGE

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania farmers are suffering increased crop losses due to deer each year; and,

WHEREAS, the deer population exceeds the target level in many areas of the state; and,

WHEREAS, the over population of deer is also detrimental to the state's forests and results in greater numbers of deer killed on roadways (which causes damage to vehicles and possible human injury);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Game Commission is urged to:

1. Continue to reinstate the bonus deer tag program for antlerless deer and administer the program in a manner that will optimize the sale of bonus tags and harvesting of deer;
2. Continue establish special seasons or permits to allow hunters to kill deer causing crop damage during the growing season instead of only allowing farmers to kill deer for crop damage.
3. Expand the area eligible for hunting under the deer damage hot spot program to include woodland managed under a forest stewardship plan; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that if the Game Commission will not take action to effectively reduce the deer population to target levels in a reasonable time period, that the Game Commission be required to reimburse farmers for crop damage; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations work with State Forest officials and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to open any deemed necessary state forest lands and Pennsylvania Game Commission lands bordering farms that have a deer damage extended season.

ELK DAMAGE AND FARMING

WHEREAS, elk farming is a growing segment of the state's agricultural economy. Products from elk farming are now being offered for sale on a regional, national and international basis; and,

WHEREAS, the state's domestic cervidae industry is ruled under a bifurcated regulatory scheme, with both the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Game Commission having jurisdiction over the livestock on elk farmers, resulting in government regulation without the benefits of government support afforded to other livestock producers and impediments to the industry's expansion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support legislation which would include any farm operation with privately owned cervidae species involved in the production, growing, breeding, using harvesting, transporting, exporting, importing or marketing of cervidae species or cervidae products within the definition of agriculture, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that these cervidae farmers should be placed under the sole regulatory purview of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations oppose any efforts to deny farmers the right to destroy elk that are causing crop damage.

ENFORCEMENT OF ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State council of Farm Organizations supports changes in law to make agents for private humane society organizations more accountable to local communities in which the agent acts to enforce animal cruelty laws and provide local communities with meaningful measures to revoke enforcement authority of any agent who has been shown to have abused his or her enforcement authority.

EQUINE LIABILITY ACT

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support legislation to protect landowners from legal liability when land and horses are used for non-commercial recreational equine activities.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, the horse racing industry provides valuable contributions to the agriculture community and to the Commonwealth; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Pennsylvania Council of Farm Organizations supports the viability of the horse racing industry and, the council would encourage the state General Assembly to be cognizant of the contribution the industry has made and continues to make if an when other forms of gambling are considered; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that if and when other forms of gambling are considered, sufficient funding be provided for equine related industries.

HORSE TRANSPORTATION

WHEREAS, recently proposed state legislation to regulate the transportation of horses would impose conflicting and significantly more stringent standards on persons transporting horses than the standards to be imposed under proposed federal regulations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes the adopting of any state law or regulation that will establish more stringent standards or requirements for transportation of horses or other animals than federal transportation standards.

IMPORTED LIVESTOCK

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the PA Animal Health Commission and the PA Secretary of Agriculture should be involved in livestock importation so farmers can be assured that imported animals are certified to meet USDA and PA Department of Agriculture health regulations before they are imported.

MASTITIS FACILITY

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that a mastitis culturing program and facilities be made available to all farmers in the State of Pennsylvania on a voluntary basis under the Bureau of Animal Industry.

RABIES ERADICATION

WHEREAS, rabies is becoming a serious problem for the Commonwealth and this is particularly averse to farming operations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Legislature continue to allocate money for rabies research and develop action programs to eradicate rabies and the animal carriers.

DAIRY ISSUES

CONTINUANCE OF PENNSYLVANIA MILK MARKETING BOARD

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board provides for the protection of Pennsylvania dairy farmers while ensuring a readily available supply of milk at a competitive price;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations renew its support for the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board.

ENFORCE STANDARDS FOR CHEESE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that standards of identity be enforced for various natural milk product cheeses. Any product similar in appearance, odor or taste not meeting these standards could not be identified as cheese, or use the name "cheese" in its labeling.

JOHNE'S DISEASE

WHEREAS, Johne's Disease in dairy cattle is a growing concern in PA and across the nation; and,

WHEREAS, currently there is no cure for the disease;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations encourage the Animal Health Commission to determine the extent of the disease and the need for indemnity and vaccination programs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that we encourage research to develop a more viable vaccine than is currently available.

PENNSYLVANIA MILK PRODUCERS SECURITY ACT

WHEREAS, the number of milk dealers have decreased during the last 10 years; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania dairy farmers are selling more milk to fewer dealers, causing an increase in financial risk to the state's dairy farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support amendments in the Pennsylvania Milk Producers Security Act to provide increased financial security to Pennsylvania dairy farmers.

SCHOOL MILK SALES

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that an educational program be conducted at institutions and schools about the proper storage and handling of milk; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that local school districts be encouraged to participate in federally subsidized school breakfast programs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture be required to monitor the temperature and handling procedures of milk at institutions and stores to make sure that present regulations pertaining to quality control are enforced.

SODA SALES IN SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, many state school districts have signed exclusive vending agreements with soda companies, which are displacing milk sales;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Council of Farm Organizations encourages all school districts to consider the negative nutritional effects these deals have on the children before entering into an agreement.

STRAY VOLTAGE

WHEREAS, the PA Public Utility Commission does not have guidelines on stray voltage to govern electric companies even though stray voltage continues to be a problem for many dairy farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the PA P.U.C. to develop guidelines on stray voltage, with acceptable tolerance of stray voltage being less than 1/2 volt.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

AG BIOMASS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State council of Farm Organizations support the development of systems and the construction of facilities to use Ag Biomass from switch grass and other sources to produce power and utilize excess nutrients.

ANTI-LITTER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania streets and highways continue to be littered by many persons who disregard current laws; and,

WHEREAS, farmers continue to suffer serious financial loss from littered beverage bottles and cans on farms;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports active anti-litter law enforcement programs and educational efforts; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that legislation be enacted which would require the placement and collection of minimum deposits on all beverage containers sold at retail in Pennsylvania; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports governmental action to compensate farmers who incur crop, livestock or equipment damage or other financial loss as a result of discarded bottles and cans.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports:

Increased funding for the state Farmland Preservation Program and development of a system to make it easier for landowners to preserve farms.

A new bond issue on farmland preservation to replace the depleted fund.

Townships whose farmland preservation programs are approved by the State Agricultural Land Preservation Board be eligible for state farmland preservation funds, based on the amount of matching funds provided by the township.

LAND USE PLANNING

WHEREAS, farmers are the major landowners in Pennsylvania;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports regional land use planning if it provides for local control and assures adequate compensation to landowners affected by a land use plan that prohibits land use for other than environmental purposes.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

WHEREAS, in many rural areas of Pennsylvania, noxious weeds continue to exist and germinate and thereby threaten to spread onto agricultural land; and,

WHEREAS, once a noxious weed spreads onto agricultural land it is extremely difficult and time-consuming to eradicate; and,

WHEREAS, present laws and activities by the Department of Agriculture are inadequate to provide effective local action to control the existence and spread of noxious weeds;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the establishment of a statewide network of noxious weed investigation, control, information, technical assistance and cost sharing through information, agreements between the PA Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Agricultural Extension service and local governments responsible for compliance.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that there be full funding for nutrient management administration and enforcement, and full funding for cost-sharing of nutrient management practices; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that criteria for submission and approval of nutrient management plans for agricultural operations to be submitted under state law, be based exclusively on nitrogen, and that no criteria be established for other nutrients.

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support continuation of the State Conservation Commission operating under the direction of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the continuation of the current method of appointment of County Conservation District Directors by County Commissioners; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that adequate line item funding for the Commission's administrative costs be provided annually; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the administrative operations of the Commission continue to be managed through a full-time executive director and staff; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the 21st Century Environment Commission recommendation that the State Conservation Commission lead an effort, in conjunction with representatives of the agricultural and academic communities, to promote environmentally and economically sustainable practices and management techniques in agriculture and other land uses through a comprehensive program of education, technical assistance, planning and financial assistance; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the 21st Century Environment Commission recommendation that the Commonwealth establish and fund a comprehensive state-wide agricultural non-point source pollution abatement cost-share program and low interest on program administered by the State Conservation Commission and County Conservation Districts to assist the agricultural community through education, economic incentives and traditional methods such as land use planning.

SUNDAY HUNTING

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law currently places, and has historically, placed extensive limitations on authorized hunting of the public on Sunday; and,

WHEREAS, Sunday continues to be the day of the week in which Pennsylvania's farm families are able to maintain their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being through the peaceful use and enjoyment of their farms, and it is imperative to the continued well-being of farm families that the current restrictions in hunting of the public on Sunday be maintained;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports avenues other than lessening of current restrictions on Sunday hunting, such as extension of periods of deer and hunting seasons, to provide the public with greater flexibility to participate in hunting activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations oppose any change in law to reduce the current restrictions on Sunday hunting.

UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS

WHEREAS, the Underground Storage Environmental Cleanup Program has provided farmers and other landowners with needed financial assistance to offset costs for removal of underground storage tanks and clean up of leaking and malfunctioning tanks;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends continued funding for the Underground Storage tank Environmental Cleanup Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that these funds be dedicated to the program and not used for other purposes.

WATER WELL STANDARDS

WHEREAS, state proposals may be offered to establish expensive standards for plugging water wells and require farmers to plug all water wells no longer in use in accordance with those standards;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes any attempt to require any landowner to plug any abandoned water well on his or her property unless sufficient grant monies are made available to pay for plugging costs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Council supports state preemption on any water well standards.

GOVERNMENTAL ISSUES

ADULT EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support efforts to change the school code, increasing adult education reimbursement to the local school districts.

AGRICULTURE AWARENESS FOUNDATION

WHEREAS, the Agriculture Awareness Foundation is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture to the lives and welfare of society; and,

WHEREAS, the Agriculture Awareness Foundation has promoted and sponsored programs to encourage school districts and teachers to incorporate agricultural education in school curricula;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Council of Farm Organizations endorsed the Agriculture Awareness Foundation and supports efforts by the Foundation to seek and receive increased financial support from the public.

AGRICULTURAL DEED TRANSFERS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations oppose transferring agriculture deed restrictions from one land parcel to another.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

WHEREAS, Agricultural Education Standards are currently extremely limited, do not reflect recent advances in modern agriculture, and are included in the Chapter 4 Environment and Ecology Standards where they receive substandard attention; and,

WHEREAS, the Chapter 4 Standards will automatically be reviewed within the near future and this review provides an opportunity to rectify the weaknesses in the current standards and the oversight of not adopting separate agricultural education standards;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations and the agricultural community encourage the development, adoption and implementation of a separate Academic Standard for Agricultural Science and Agriculture Education; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that this educational standard be more comprehensive and reflect a broad diversity of advances in modern agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL EXEMPTION FROM BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

WHEREAS, costs for permitting and other requirements under the Uniform Construction Code seriously and unreasonably impede the ability of farmers directly marketing their products on the farm to construct the types of buildings needed to attract and maintain the customer base necessary to successfully sustain their farm market operation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports legislation to extend the agricultural exemption from Uniform Construction Code regulation to include farm market buildings.

AGRICULTURE YOUTH PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, agriculture is the leading industry in Pennsylvania and the opportunities for employment point out the need for quality agricultural education programs to assure a dependable supply of skilled workers; and, WHEREAS, the cost of initiating and maintaining high quality agriculture education programs is high and discourages local school boards to operate these programs;

WHEREAS, Act 36 of 1999 poses a substantial financial threat to approximately 100 school districts (2/3 of the Pennsylvania vocational students), that offer less than 8 vocational agriculture programs in the district;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support an annualized general fund budget line item for FFA programs which support and develop the future leaders of the state's agricultural and rural communities; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations encourage school districts to recognize the educational value of 4-H and FFA programs.

CALIBRATION OF MOISTURE METERS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that all moisture meters being used by purchases of grain, oil seeds, forage and hay be calibrated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the PDA create a uniform shrinkage chart be made available to producers and that chart be used by all purchasers as the criteria for shrinkage.

CONSERVING AGRICULTURAL AREAS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support legislation, programs and procedures that would ensure that public lands are not routinely avoided at the expense of farm land when public facilities and structures are proposed to be located; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Agricultural Lands Condemnations Board be empowered to review and intervene when public projects threaten valuable agricultural areas.

DOG LAW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support the continuation of current programs for state enforcement of the dog law.

EMINENT DOMAIN

WHEREAS, there are problems with municipalities, municipal authorities, private companies, utilities and others that use the power of eminent domain to take land;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations:

Require all municipal entities, utilities and authorities to receive approval by the PA Ag Land Condemnation Approval Board prior to exercising eminent domain proceedings on farmland; and,

Prohibit municipalities and municipal authorities from condemning land in another municipality unless authorized by the municipality in which the land is located.

EXTENSION SERVICE

WHEREAS, in years past, the Agricultural Extension Service is a valuable tool to American Agriculture and the American farmer plays an important role in feeding the world today;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the State Legislature and County Commissioners be urged to maintain and consider additional appropriations to the Agricultural Extension Services as a continuing valued service and information center to American agriculture to all Commonwealth residents.

FARMLAND AND FORESTLAND ASSESSMENT LAW

WHEREAS, owners of properties qualifying for preferential property tax assessment as agricultural reserve are failing to open their lands to the public for recreational use, as required by law;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that counties be required to periodically inspect agricultural reserve lands to ensure that their owners are not restricting public access for recreational purposes; and terminate preferential assessment of agricultural reserve lands when the county discovers the land is not open to the public.

FARMSTEAD PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that all farm buildings used solely for agricultural purposes be exempt from real estate taxes; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends the current scope of farmstead property eligible for property tax assessment relief be expanded to include all farms that the owner is operating.

FOOD SAFETY

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the responsibility for food safety and the laboratory services provided by the Bureau of Food Safety in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture remain under the administrative jurisdiction of PDA to ensure uniformity in food safety testing; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports a single state agency having primacy over food safety issues, and supports maintaining this responsibility within the PA Department of Agriculture; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the PA Department of Agriculture should be represented at all state level inter-agency discussions of food safety.

INCREASE RESEARCH FUNDS

WHEREAS, there is a constant need for state appropriations for agricultural research into animal and plant diseases, more effective production techniques, and conservation and nutrient management;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports needed state appropriations for Agricultural Research; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations work with other groups to secure additional alternate funding or tax base to fund other worthy environmental, animal health, nutrient management, alternate ways of waste disposal, conservation, nutrition management and other related projects.

LOCAL AMUSEMENT TAX

WHEREAS, many municipalities and school districts obtain substantial revenues from amusement taxes; and,

WHEREAS, any further limitations on local taxing districts will create greater property tax burdens on farmers and other property owners;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes any further limitation in the current authority of municipalities and school district to impose amusement taxes.

INCOME TAXATION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports amendments to laws governing state and local income taxing authority to:

Exempt from quarterly state income tax reporting and payment requirements taxpayers whose gross income from farming is at least two-thirds of the total gross income for either the current or previous tax year.

Provide the same farming exemption from requirements for quarterly reporting and payment of local income taxes as is provided understate income tax laws.

MEMBERS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that the number of General Assembly members should remain at its present level of 203 House members and 50 Senate members.

MINIMUM WAGE

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania employers, especially agricultural employers, cannot afford to pay higher wages than their counterparts in other states and still remain competitive in the marketplace. Any increase in the minimum wage, if it becomes necessary, must be made by Congress on a nationwide basis, so all employers will be equally affected;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes any attempt to raise the minimum wage in Pennsylvania that is above federal levels.

ONE PLAN SYSTEM

WHEREAS, Conservation and environmental plans are becoming more numerous;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Council of Farm Organization encourages local, state and federal government to work toward and enact a one-plan system for securing permits and signing up for programs.

PENNSYLVANIA FARM LINK

WHEREAS, agriculture is the single largest industry in the Commonwealth. With the average age of a Pennsylvania farmer now over 52 and the loss of farms at a rate of about 1,000 per year, with more and more farmers taking off-farm jobs to help make ends meet, the state is in jeopardy of being forced to rely increasingly on imported food;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's Farm Link Program and its efforts to link aspiring farmers with landowners or more experienced farmers nearing retirement.

PRIMACY ON REGULATORY LAWS RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS

WHEREAS, state laws affecting the regulation of specific products used for agriculture and agribusiness in Pennsylvania are designed to maintain statewide quality, purity, and safety in use of these products; and,

WHEREAS, local ordinances which might attempt to regulate these products would impact significantly on intrastate and interstate commerce and use of such products, resulting in great harm to the economic viability of Pennsylvania agriculture;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports legislation that asserts the primacy of state laws and pre-emption of local ordinances governing the manufacture, grading, labeling, sale and use of farm products, fertilizers, plant growth substances, lime, seeds, and feed; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that no local government shall adopt any ordinances that attempt to preempt any issue already preempted statewide. WHEREAS, state laws affecting the regulation of specific products used for agriculture and agribusiness in Pennsylvania are designed to maintain statewide quality, purity and safety in use of these products; and,

PRODUCT REGULATION AND STANDARDS

WHEREAS, recent actions by the PA Fish and Boat Commission issuing public warnings about eating trout because of PCB traces well within established FDA safety levels, have caused significant economic harm to the state's aquaculture industry; and,

WHEREAS, the use of a standard other than FDA requirements and regulatory authority beyond that of the PA Department of Agriculture for a single feed, food or animal product is not only unfair to that industry, but potentially damaging to the entire animal feed and production industries of the state;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations reassert our support of the PA Department of Agriculture being the lead state agency and having primacy over food safety issues, and that agricultural and food industries should be responsible for meeting FDA requirements as the standard for determining product safety; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support state actions to assist the aquaculture and feed industries in recovering from all damages resulting from the actions of the PA Fish and Boat Commission.

REFORM LOCAL TAX STRUCTURE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports a system in which individual counties and municipalities are given the opportunity in taxing districts to choose funding sources from among several options.

REORGANIZATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, there is much duplication and overlap of responsibilities between different departments of state government; and,

WHEREAS, this duplication results in overlapping responsibilities, confusion and expensive duplication of State Services. Eliminating this duplication could save many dollars and make state government more responsive to the people;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations request the General Assembly recognize the unique characteristics of Pennsylvania agriculture and related industries as it considers legislation to reorganize state government.

RIGHT TO FARM PROTECTIONS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations continue to support laws which will enhance farming and not allow local governing units the ability to restrict farming operations; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations continue to support laws that will protect farmers' economic need for expansion and technological advancement of their farming operations.

SPLIT-RATE PROPERTY TAXATION

WHEREAS, local governments have shown increasing interest in obtaining legal authority to impose different rates of taxation on land than on buildings in order to encourage development of idle land; and,

WHEREAS, imposition of higher rates of property tax on land than on buildings would cause farmers, who are already overburdened by local taxes, to bear a greater burden of local taxes than disproportionate share they are already bearing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that any changes to allow that would grant local governments authority to establish a split-rate form of property taxation require local governments to impose the lowest tax rate on farmland and farm buildings.

STATE FOOD PURCHASE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, many Pennsylvanians live in poverty and food is a basic human need; and,

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has responded with food assistance for those Pennsylvanians who are in need in all 67 counties of the Commonwealth the State Food Purchase Program; and,

WHEREAS, the need for food assistance for those in need continues and food from the United States Department of Agriculture's Emergency Food Assistance has been reduced;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports increased funding for the State Food Purchase Program.

STATE SALES TAX

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports changes in law to exempt from state sales tax any purchase by a farmer or custom operator of a vehicle that is to be registered as or that the Vehicle Code classifies as an implement of husbandry or commercial implement of husbandry.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the development of farming practices that increase farm income while protecting or enhancing the environment;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as required by law, to fully fund and implement the Sustainable Agriculture Program within the Department of Agriculture.

UNAUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES ON FARMS

WHEREAS, persons continue to trespass and leave personal property on farms without authorization or knowledge of the farm owner; and,

WHEREAS, actions by farmers to remove or otherwise take physical possession of property illegally placed and abandoned on their farms have subjected farmers to serious personal confrontations by trespasser and have resulted in serious civil and criminal actions being brought against the farmer;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports changes in law that would terminate trespassers' legal ownership of personal property the trespasser voluntarily left on the farm without authorization.

UNLAWFUL INTIMIDATION OF FARM OPERATIONS

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the enactment of legislation to impose increased criminal penalties for acts of trespass, vandalism or other unlawful acts on farms or private properties that are performed for the purpose of preventing or intimidating farmers from performing lawful farming activities.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

ANNUAL PERMITS FOR OVERSIZE FARM EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, changes in farm operations have increased the need for farmers and custom operators to move oversize farm equipment on a year round basis;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports state action to create annual permits to transport oversize farm equipment on Pennsylvania roads, in addition to seasonal and book permits, which are currently provided.

BACK HAULING OF FOODSTUFF AND FEEDSTUFF

WHEREAS, recent interpretations and enforcement of laws governing the use of "waste" trucks for hauling of foodstuff and feedstuff and seriously hampered the ability of farmers and smaller trucking operations to lawfully haul farm and feed products;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports amendments to the state vehicle code which will:

1. Exempt farmers hauling agricultural products to or from the farm from back hauling restrictions;
2. Allow commercial truck operators to use trucks sporadically used to haul waste for hauling "foodstuffs" do not apply to livestock feed;
3. Clearly state that restrictions against back hauling of "foodstuffs" do not apply to livestock feed; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the vehicle code continue to prohibit food back hauling by trucks used substantially to haul waste.

COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION OF ANIMALS

WHEREAS, current state laws, including the Cruelty to Animals Law, establish sufficient standards for lawful and unlawful transportation of animals and provide law enforcement officials with adequate discretion for prosecution and sanction of persons transporting animals in a manner that is detrimental to the safety or welfare of such animals;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that before any new statutes or any amendments of current statutes regulating the commercial transportation of animals are enacted, enforcement agencies be required to demonstrate that current laws are being aggressively enforced, and the applicable legal standards under current law governing animal transportation are inadequate to protect the reasonable safety and welfare of animals during transportation.

DECLARED EMERGENCIES

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that vehicles transporting essential supplies or services to farms or transporting perishable agricultural products from farms be exempt from vehicle restrictions during declared emergencies.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS GOVERNING OPERATIONS OF VEHICLES

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes any change in law to allow municipal police officers to use radar to enforce vehicle speed limits.

FARM VEHICLES

WHEREAS, changes in farm operations have increased the need for farmers to use the services of custom operators and the need for farmers and custom operators to operate and move large trucks oversize farm equipment on a year round basis;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports amendments to the Vehicle Code that will:

1. Allow custom/commercial operators to receive the same exemptions and other benefits for trucks, farm machinery and other vehicles the operator owns and uses for custom farm services as the Vehicle Code provides to farmers who use their vehicles exclusively for the farms they own or operate;
2. Exempt from registration any trailer or semi-trailer that is being pulled by a properly operated farm truck or farm tractor exempt from registration;
3. Provide a yearly permit for implements of husbandry exceeding 14' 6" but less than 16' 6" to allow vehicles to be driven, hauled or towed between sunrise and sunset on highways other than freeways;
4. Authorize without condition or limitation a truck or truck tractor purchased by farmer for use under the biennial farm vehicle certificate of exemption to be initially operated from the location of purchase to the farmer's farm;
5. Provide for the option of obtaining permanent exemptions from registration for farm vehicles;
6. Provide permission to travel between sunset and sunrise as long as proper lighting is provided;
7. Provide a system that allows a Commercial implement of Husbandry or an implement of Husbandry to be a unique classification and not compared to a truck tractor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports state action to create annual permits to transport oversize farm equipment on Pennsylvania roads, in addition to seasonal and book permits which are currently provided; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes any statute or regulation that would require the installation or use of strobe lights on implements of husbandry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation provide for less intrusive alternatives to the production of schedule F income tax statements to demonstrate a person's qualification to obtain a farm vehicle registration or exemption.

PROMOTIONAL ROAD SIGNS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support legislation that exempts agriculture from local ordinances prohibiting the promotion of seasonal crops such as fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and Christmas trees.

RETAIN USE FOR HIGHWAY FUNDS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes any attempt to repeal the constitutional amendment disallowing highway funds to be used for any purpose other than highway construction, repair and state police highway patrol practices.

RURAL ROAD AND BRIDGE MAINTENANCE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations requests continued priority for the maintenance and repair of existing rural state roads and bridges prior to building new roads and bridges and increase funding for these repairs and improved maintenance; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations encourage PennDot to consider wood bridge construction when appropriate; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations requests the Department of Transportation work with representatives of the agriculture community to identify key access routes for transportation of agricultural inputs and products, and that these routes be given priority in development of county road and bridge maintenance planning.

STATE AND FEDERAL RESOLUTIONS

ANIMAL AND PRODUCTION ISSUES

ANIMAL WELFARE

WHEREAS, farmers as well as non-farmers are interested in the continuous advancement of practices used in farm animal production and processing; and

WHEREAS, there are several societies and professional organizations including farm organizations composed of experienced, qualified scientists and farmers who have assisted in setting forth animal welfare, care and use guidelines and have identified approved practices,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that PA State Council of Farm Organizations encourage all parties who have legislative and/or regulatory authority to obtain information about animal well-being, care and use from science-based, experienced sources.

AQUACULTURE

WHEREAS, there has been significant increase in the number of establishments involved in the commercial production of aquatic animals and plants for human food consumption; and,

WHEREAS, the purposes and objectives of commercial agricultural production closely parallel those of more traditional forms of agricultural production;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support efforts between the state's aquaculture industry, educational institutions and the Commonwealth to hold a statewide seminar to cover various productions, processing and marketing methodologies; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Council support efforts to utilize state and federal resources to expand aquaculture research and development.

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND GENETIC ENGINEERING

WHEREAS, research in areas of biotechnology and genetic engineering to develop new products and make more efficient the production, use and digestibility of present agricultural products is crucial to the development of new crops and the future protection of animal health and efficiency; and,

WHEREAS, some of this research is being conducted by private industry, some by universities and some by the federal government;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports legislation which would allow research and use of bio-tech and genetic engineering to continue and be encouraged to expand; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the FDA regulation of food labeling, and opposes state or federal legislation to mandate labeling of products produced using genetically modified organisms.

CROP DAMAGE

WHEREAS, crop damage caused by wildlife continues to be a serious problem for Pennsylvania farmers, despite efforts by the Pennsylvania Game Commission to control crop damage losses; and,

WHEREAS, the Federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Bureau of Wildlife Damage Control has recently shown an interest in establishing within Pennsylvania a cooperative program to address wildlife damage complaints and to provide technical assistance to individual farmers to effectively reduce losses caused by wildlife;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations encourages the Pennsylvania Game Commission to vigorously pursue the establishment of a cooperative program with APHIS to provide individual farmers suffering significant wildlife caused losses with educational and technical assistance to reduce such losses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports state funding for an Integrated Predator Management Program in cooperation with USDA Wildlife Service for control of wildlife damage.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR AGRICULTURE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends:

1. That there be legislation which would include sufficient minimum bonding requirements to protect farmers from financial loss to the extent possible due to the bankruptcy of a grain elevator or any commercial purchaser or agricultural products.
2. That farm commodities not covered by contract be paid for within 30 days.
3. That bonding of livestock auctions and dealers be enough to cover 75 percent of moneys normally outstanding and owed to producers.

GRAZING STATISTICS

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania and National Agricultural Statistics Service does not report on the production of grazed acres as a use of tillable land;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations petition the Statistics Service to report the production of grazed acres as a use of tillable land.

IMPORTATION OF WILD AND EXOTIC BIRDS

WHEREAS, existing foreign and federal laws and regulations and international treaties provide an adequate mechanism for regulatory trade in wild and exotic birds and safe health practices by quarantine;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the existing state and federal laws and regulations and international treaties as adequate protection for the state's poultry industry.

INCREASE IN THE THRESHOLD FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COVERAGE OF FARM EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, the failure of unemployment compensation laws to index the threshold for required unemployment compensation coverage of agricultural employees has rendered the agricultural exemption meaningless, and has forced many farmers to provide unemployment compensation coverage even though they cannot reasonable afford to do so;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports changes to state and federal unemployment compensation laws which will:

1. Increase the payroll threshold for mandatory coverage of agricultural labor from \$20,000 per calendar quarter to \$40,000 per calendar quarter.
2. Increase the manpower threshold for mandatory coverage of agricultural labor from the employment of 10 workers in any portion of 20 calendar weeks to the employment of 15 workers in any portion of 30 calendar weeks.

INDEMNITY PROGRAM FOR ANIMAL DISEASE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: to better control Brucellosis, the PA State Council of Farm Organizations recommends a minimum fine of \$10,000 and permanent suspension of the dealers license for insufficient identification of animals or ear tag/health chart manipulation; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the following suggestions be implemented to help eradicate and prevent Brucellosis outbreak:

1. All cattle being sold at a livestock auction for beef or beef purposes be appropriately close identified.
2. All future health charts include the following:
 - a. Herd or origin;
 - b. A required endorsement from each handler or herd the animal was in while the health chart was valid.
3. A minimum \$2,500 fine for any licensed cattle dealer implicated in any way with a convicted cattle dealer; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that Federal and/or State Indemnification funds be paid for hogs exterminated because of Pseudorabies; and that adequate research funding of research for Pseudorabies be appropriated to understand, control and eradicate the disease; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Animal Health Commission to establish an action program to control and eradicate Bovine Leukemia (BTV).

ODOR AND AIR POLLUTION CONTROL

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that there be substantial funding for research to find solutions to farm odor and air pollution problems.

PRODUCER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

WHEREAS, contracts have been used for over 30 years to provide increased income to producers with limited risk, while providing a reliable source of high quality product for buyers; and,

WHEREAS, several other state legislatures are considering legislation aimed at protecting agricultural producers involved in contracting for production of agricultural products;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the process of contracting for production of agricultural products; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Council opposes legislation that:

1. Stifles competition by restricting the opportunity for producers to receive pay for performance, superior quality, or special services;
2. Undermines vital business practices by banning confidentiality protections for both buyers and producers, which would make access to proprietary business information easily available to competitors;
3. Creates burdensome paperwork; or
4. Requires disclosure of all possible risks involved in a contract.

PROMPT PAYMENT

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports laws to protect family farmers from not being paid for their service or products in a reasonable time after the products are shipped, and supports prompt payment laws for farm products raised and shipped under contract or otherwise to companies purchasing them.

SEASONAL AGRICULTURE LABOR

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recognizes a crisis in Pennsylvania's agricultural labor situation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the public continue to be informed of the problems regarding seasonal farm labor and the declining efficiency of this force. Rising costs and unnecessary and destructive governmental bureaucratic interference are weakening the competitive position of Pennsylvania's farms and orchards, contributing to inflation and costing Pennsylvania's consumers extra and unnecessary expenses in their food bills; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations strongly urges the Pennsylvania State Legislature to pass legislation that would limit the eligibility of seasonal workers within the State Unemployment Compensations Program; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that duplicate inspections of seasonal farm labor housing facilities by state and federal agencies be eliminated by a cooperative working agreement between the agencies.

DAIRY ISSUES

MILK HAULERS ON FEDERAL ROADS

WHEREAS, passage of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System Act in 1956, linked federal funding to a prohibition on overweight trucks with divisible loads, unless a state had previously permitted such hauling. Milk haulers in New York, which was grandfathered under the act, are able to move raw milk in 95,000 pound trucks over all highways, state, national and local until they reach the Pennsylvania border. Then the trucks must leave the Interstate Highway system and find state routes in order to remain compliant with the law; and,

WHEREAS, the hauling of milk is a complicated venture that transcends state borders. It is rare that milk assembled in one geographic area is delivered to the same plant each and every day, because of fluctuations in the market for fluid milk. Loads of milk must be rerouted from the Interstate System onto state roads, which adds significantly to the cost of transportation; and,

WHEREAS, other commodities, shipped as containerized cargo are not subject to this prohibition because federal law has determined that they are non-divisible loads; and,

WHEREAS, removing this barrier to efficient interstate shipment of milk and reducing the costs now born by dairy cooperatives and their farmer members would provide a significant economic boost to the region;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges state and federal legislation that would permit travel by raw milk haulers on Highways in the Eisenhower Interstate system without jeopardizing federal funding to the Commonwealth for highway construction and maintenance.

MILK RESIDUE TESTING

WHEREAS, a significant amount of producer milk has been rejected as a result of milk residue testing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends the development and implementation of a standardized method of milk residue testing that will establish a reasonable tolerance level for milk residues and will assure accurate and consistent test results.

SERVE REAL PRODUCTS

WHEREAS, substitute products are offered in place of natural agricultural products in restaurants and public establishments;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports legislation requiring that where a natural Ag product is identified such products be used in such establishments.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

ACID RAINS

WHEREAS, acid rains (with pH's of 4.5 and lower) are causing substantial concern to agriculture because of crop damage and the need for more lime to be applied to the soil by farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports increased research into the subject. And, because the pollution occurs in all states, we encourage the USDA to continue their involvement in studies and research on the national level.

FERTILIZER PROGRAMS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that where a farmer has an erosion and sedimentation plan or a conservation plan and fertilizes in accordance with the recommendations adopted from a soil test done by an approved laboratory, that the farmer's fertilization program not be declared a pollutant and his right to purchase and use not be restricted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that two tests for phosphorus be developed:

A test for the total phosphorus in the soil.

A test for the amount of phosphorus that will be available for the crop; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that phosphorus applications be based on the availability of phosphorus to the current crop rather than the total amount of phosphorus in the soil.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports use of integrated pest management as a sustainable approach to effectively managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks; and

WHEREAS, the PA Department of Agriculture has initiated programs for notification of families with chemically sensitive children in schools, and for adoption of voluntary school IPM programs in PA which have been widely adopted and accepted;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations oppose legislation mandating use of IPM in schools and repeated notification of all students, unless sufficient state funding is available to accomplish such mandates; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that any state legislation or regulation concerning IPM use a definition consistent with that adopted in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that there be full funding for nutrient management administration and enforcement, and full funding for cost-sharing of nutrient management practices.

NUTRIENT RUNOFF

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that the following actions be taken to address non-point source nutrient runoff:

1. Development of voluntary programs to implement best management practices (BMP's) on farmland, utilizing governmental cost-sharing.
2. Development of educational and research sedimentation loss.
3. Employment of additional qualified personnel at the state level to provide technical assistance.
4. Periodic updating, revision and publication of soil mapping and soil survey information.
5. Research in the storage, handling and utilization of and food processing waste to protect the environment.
6. Develop BMP's for septic, storm water and air pollution as mandated to DEP under the nutrient management law.
7. Encourage the planting of vegetative stream buffers with the vegetation being harvested to remove the nutrients it collects and with the vegetation being designated for uses other than livestock feed.

PESTICIDE AND GROUNDWATER REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the EPA has proposed a rule for a State Management Plan for Regulation of Pesticides and groundwater; and,

WHEREAS, the PA State Council of Farm Organizations supports the concept of managing pesticides and water protection through federal and state pesticide laws; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed SMP rule, if enacted, would create unfunded mandates for state regulators, and would force a misdirection of limited existing state resources. It would circumvent the FIFRA programs and restricted use labeling under existing law; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed SMP could result in de facto cancellation of herbicide and pesticide products to the detriment of the farm community;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. EPA oversight of state pesticide programs should be limited to regional office review of state “generic” pesticide management plans.
2. EPA should return to the conventional classification for pesticides for restricted use, to take advantage of state programs for certifying and training applicators, and return to the “step-wise” approach outlined in the agency’s pesticide and groundwater strategy.
3. States should be free to choose active ingredient products and uses that present water quality concerns within the state, to best fit state needs.
4. EPA should incorporate the state management plan program into the existing cooperative agreement concept to assure local priorities.
5. EPA should reassess the program and costs of the State Management Plan including more current economic assessments, which incorporate data based on the 1995 Farm Bill.

PESTICIDE AND HERBICIDE REGULATION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the responsibility for regulations of agricultural chemicals provided by the Bureau of Plant Industry remain under the administrative jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to ensure conformity with federal laws and uniformity in regulatory application.

PESTICIDES FOR CROPS

WHEREAS, pesticides are vital in the production of quality fruit, grain, floral, ornamental, turf and vegetable crops. Under present federal regulations and interpretations, a large number of these crops have no adequate protection from diseases, insects and weeds, and as a result, a reliable supply is in jeopardy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations favors efforts to ensure timely approval and availability of necessary pesticides for use in production and preservation of all crops.

RECYCLABLE RESIDUALS AND BIOSOLIDS

WHEREAS, biosolids and other organic residuals are a valuable resource that should be reused and recycled; and,

WHEREAS, it is increasingly apparent that the reuse of recyclable materials will become imperative for the preserving of landfill and beneficial use of the formerly disposed-of-materials;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations requests state and federal assistance and emphasis in research on current and alternative methods of utilizing or disposing of both organic and inorganic materials, including waste water treatment plant sludge (biosolids), farm manures, and food processing residuals.
2. That EPA and DEP continue to refine present regulations and guidelines in regard to the application of biosolids, food processing residuals, and other beneficially reusable materials through continued dialogue with industry and related interests.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Congress to adequately fund soil and water conservation programs including technical assistance.

STREAM CLEARANCE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that sufficient funds be used in rural areas in stream clearance projects to reduce the impact of future flooding.

TRIAZINE HERBICIDES

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support continued availability and appropriate use of the triazine herbicides; and,

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED: that the state's Congressional delegation work to insure that the process and decisions of EPA special reviews be based on established scientific data and consider fully the economic impact of all decisions to restrict labels and use.

WATER USE AND ALLOCATION

WHEREAS, we recognize the benefits and desirability of water conservation; and,

WHEREAS, water is a necessary resource to the operation of a farm and for processing perishables;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that any water allocation plan recognize the full needs of a farm operation and food processing plants for water; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that any farm and food processing plant be allotted a full allocation of water for the purposes of food production and processing; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that regulatory bodies with regional sensitivities be appointed to monitor and control water resources; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that water use planning occur through existing river basin compacts with assistance from county conservation districts; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that historical use be a determining factor in allocating water to farms; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the state establish criteria to enhance additional groundwater recharge which could include the land application of gray water from sewage treatment plants and the development of lists of types of plants which encourage surface water to move to the water table at a more rapid rate; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that all water laws and regulations require state preemption.

WATER USE REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, various River Basin Commissions water use regulations pertaining to consumptive use have been put on hold until the agricultural community and the SRBC can develop a mutually agreeable method whereby agriculture can comply;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the PA State Council of Farm Organizations support a government funded reservoir storage of make up water to sashays the Commissions' consumptive use regulations for agriculture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports reinstatement of federal funding for river basin commissions.

WETLANDS

WHEREAS, federal and state agencies continue to harass farmers and other landowners and impede the peaceful and use and enjoyment of their lands through unreasonable wetlands regulations; and,

WHEREAS, the current attempts to impose such arbitrary and unreasonable regulation and penalties upon farmers and landowners are against the principles of freedom and fairness, which our nation and its people hold sacred;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the enactment of legislation or regulations that would provide fairer, more reasonable and less onerous regulation of wetlands on private lands and that would include the following:

1. The exemption of wetlands of 10 acres or less from regulation.
2. A procedure to receive public and private comment before any regulated wetland areas can be so designated.
3. Written notification by certified mail be given to landowners whose properties contain regulated wetlands.
4. The history of a land's use be a criteria for consideration in the designation of wetland areas.
5. Restriction in authority to regulate wetlands in lands that, if utilized, would benefit a local economy.
6. Implementation of the principle that denial of wetlands utilization permit is a "taking" of property from which compensation would be required to be provided to landowners whose permit is denied.
7. Exemption of farmers from requirements to obtain a wetlands permit on lands in which the farmer is following an approved conservation plan.
8. Regulation of wetlands only in consultation with local conservation districts.
9. Exemption of wetland property from property and school taxes if the land cannot be used as a result of wetland preservation.

GOVERNMENTAL ISSUES

BROADEN AGRICULTURE STATISTICS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the gathering and formulation of statistics by USDA, State Department of Agriculture and the Penn State University, which can be used to show the significance of agriculture at all levels.

CROP INSURANCE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations request an increase in state and federal funding for crop insurance subsidies to financially assist farms in securing federal crop insurance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support a pilot program to insure limited nutrient application.

DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURE

WHEREAS, numerous governmental agencies regulating agriculture have different interpretations of the word "AGRICULTURE" causing confusion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations encourage all state and federal governments to develop and use a consistent definition of the word "AGRICULTURE" when regulating our industry.

DRUGS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations asks for and supports a continued strong education program on the use or misuse of drugs.

FARMERS ON POLICY MAKING BOARDS

WHEREAS, membership on advisory boards of environmental councils does not particularly include farmers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm organizations use its influence to promote such legislation which will require inclusion of operating farmers when such boards or councils are appointed at the local, state and federal levels.

FOOD QUALITY PROTECTION ACT

WHEREAS, EPA is implementing the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 without sound scientific data; and,

WHEREAS, risk estimates based on sound science and reliable real world data are essential to avoid misguided decisions, and the best way for the Environmental Protection Agency to obtain this data is to require its development and submission by the registrant through the data call in process; and,

WHEREAS, the absence of reliable information will result in fewer pest control options for United States and Pennsylvania farmers, especially for minor crops, and significant disruption of successful integrated pest management programs in the state and will jeopardize the availability and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables to consumers at all economic levels; and,

WHEREAS, the absence of reliable information will also result in fewer pest control options for urban and suburban uses, with potential losses of personal property and increased costs for human health concerns;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations strongly urge the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to use sound science and real world data from the data call in process in establishing realistic models for evaluating risks; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the Environmental Protection Agency to establish and publish uniform policies which will be used to ensure consistent implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act.

HEALTH INSURANCE

WHEREAS, health insurance costs have continued to rise and farm families must provide for their own coverage,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the state and federal governments to study and enact effective community based rather than demographic based reforms to the health care system with more stringent oversight on rate increases.

INCOME TAX EXEMPTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the enactment of legislation to exempt from federal and state income tax, capital gains on sales of agricultural conservation easements.

PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY SUITS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports general tort reform; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations seeks legislation or adequate protection from liability suits for property owners when pesticides and/or herbicides are used as approved by the Department of Agriculture as per instructions on the label; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports legislation which would grant producer - proprietors of farm markets and customer self-harvest operations an exemption from liability for injuries suffered by customers during purchase, harvest, or use of farm products, unless such proprietors directly created a situation of unreasonable risk of serious harm from which injury resulted.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER IDENTIFICATION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes state and federal requirements for applicants to provide social security numbers in hunting and fishing license applications.

STATEMENT OF INTENT ON ALL LAWS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the concept that each law contain, in the legislative history and preamble, a clear statement of the intent of the law and the impact on the general public.

SUPPORT CURRENT CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, there is substantial research in areas of biotechnology and genetic engineering to develop new products and to more efficiently produce present agricultural products; and,

WHEREAS, the certifications for safety, integrity and composition of new products as they affect both consumers and producers are now the responsibility of the Food & Drug Administration; and,

WHEREAS, state Departments of Agriculture and USDA are also involved in reviewing the results of the studies relative to such products; and,

WHEREAS, land grant colleges, private research agencies and other independent bodies are called upon to evaluate the long run value of such products to society;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the continued use of the above institutions to provide the necessary safeguards and the necessary information to consumers and producers concerning the health, safety, and economic viability of such new products.

TAX REFORM

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the elimination of state and federal capital gains tax, federal estate tax, and state inheritance tax.

FEDERAL RESOLUTIONS

DAIRY ISSUES

REDUCE CASEIN IMPORTS

WHEREAS, casein imports continue to increase into this country replacing the use of non-fat dry milk in human food and in calf milk replacer;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations use its influence to call for a reduction of casein imports for food and feed use.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

ENERGY ALLOCATIONS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that we urge our U.S. Representatives and Senators to provide regulations, which would prepare the United States to meet future crude oil emergencies by providing the President and Congress with limited standby programs. These programs should deal with regional shortages and provide for the priority needs of agriculture and agribusiness for energy supplies in the event of serious shortages.

GLOBAL CLIMATE TREATY

WHEREAS, the U.S. is involved in negotiating a Global Climate Treaty with the United Nations; and,

WHEREAS, this treaty would require mandatory reduction in carbon dioxide emissions raising the price of energy in this county while exempting other countries; and,

WHEREAS, projections show that nearly 5 million workers will lose their jobs within the first several years;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations oppose the U.N. Treaty on Global Warming as presently written that puts United States producers and workers at a disadvantage.

REDUCING AIR POLLUTION

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency is currently holding hearings across the country on their recommendations to reduce air pollution particulate matter size from 10 microns to 2.5 microns; and,

WHEREAS, there is currently no scientific research that would suggest how this reduction can be achieved or what the costs would be;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations asks EPA to delay stringent regulations on agricultural particulates until comprehensive evaluations of benefits, costs, and methods to achieve the goals can be addressed.

GOVERNMENTAL ISSUES

ACCESS TO WORLD MARKETS

WHEREAS, we believe in the basic philosophy of free world markets;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations recommends that the United States not import competing agricultural products which are subsidized by foreign government; and if any subsidized products enter the United States, countervailing duties must be applied; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that our American consumers be protected by increased inspection by the appropriate agencies and by refusing imports which are below American standards for health and quality; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that agriculture continue to have effective representation on all trade treaty negotiating teams and

work to remove barriers on the export/import of genetically altered agricultural products.

ASSIGNED PAYMENTS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations support legislation making it a crime of embezzlement on the part of the third party with appropriate penalties when a third party fails to pay amount of payment collected from the first party; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the lender must notify the producer that his payment is delinquent after ten days.

CAPPER-VOLSTEAD ACT

WHEREAS, the Capper-Volstead Act permits farmers to organize into cooperatives and cooperatives to engage in common marketing programs; and,

WHEREAS, there have been widespread efforts by legislators, enforcement agencies, anti-cooperative pressure groups and misdirected consumer organizations to weaken or destroy the protection given to farmers and consumers by the Capper-Volstead Act;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations, working with other cooperatives and associations of cooperatives and appropriate government officials, expends every effort to prevent the erosion of the legal privileges set forth for farmers and cooperatives by the Capper-Volstead Act.

EPA AND ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

WHEREAS, agriculture in Pennsylvania depends upon continued access to essential and safely regulated pesticides; and,

WHEREAS, since 2000, several special interests have filed "cookie cutter" lawsuits against the EPA alleging its failure to have an Endangered Species Act compliant process for registering and reregistering pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Several courts ordered injunctions resulting from these lawsuits would severely restrict agricultural, professional applicator and consumer access to vital pest control products. Such injunctions have included arbitrary buffer zones and use restrictions; and,

WHEREAS, these lawsuits, circumventing the FIFRA regulatory process, divert resources that might otherwise be spent protecting species; and,

WHEREAS, the EPA, NOAA-Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have developed comprehensive, collaborative regulations to comply with the Endangered Species Act; and,

WHEREAS, this rule will ensure continued access to safe and necessary pest control products, while ensuring that endangered species and habitats are protected. It will also eliminate costly duplication of effort within the federal government, streamlining the process for consultation between EPA and the two Services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the EPA's counterpart regulations to comply with the Endangered Species Act, and will communicate the same to the EPA and Congress.

FEDERAL AGRICULTURE EXTENSION AND RESEARCH FUND

WHEREAS, the National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisor Board has considered a change in the formula for allocating federal agricultural research and extension funds based on agricultural production; and,

WHEREAS, there is no evidence to suggest that these states have better expertise or research facilities to provide better research;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations encourage the continued use of the present formula and allow funds to be allocated where present institutions are set up to conduct research and extension in broad areas of agricultural production, marketing and profitability.

NATIONAL FARM LEGISLATION

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania received only marginal funding for emergency assistance after the 1998 ice storm and the 1999 summer drought, despite having severe losses. Federal farm bills have continued to put Pennsylvania and northeast agriculture at a competitive disadvantage; and,

WHEREAS, recent Congressional actions have demonstrated the need for Pennsylvania to influence federal deliberations on critical agricultural issues early in the policy making process, and to secure recognition of our unique regional characteristics and needs; and,

WHEREAS, the U. S. Farm Bill precludes the harvesting of biomass on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, which could be productively used in many ways other than as livestock feed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the PA State Council of Farm Organizations support efforts by its Congressional delegation and by northeastern states as a group to promote the viability of Pennsylvania agriculture through federal legislation, by establishing programs that reflect the state's agricultural interests in critical areas ranging from the federal Farm Bill to environmental and tax policies that affect agriculture; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Council ask the state's Congressional delegation to use its collective resources to support legislative initiatives which work to the benefit of Pennsylvania agriculture; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the new Farm Bill be formulated to allow harvesting on Conservation Reserve Program land for uses other than livestock feed.

OPPOSE INCREASED BONE IN MEAT MIXTURES

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations proposes, if there is any increase in the ratio of bone to meat (10%) in mechanically separated meats, the product be properly labeled.

RELEASE COAL TAX FUNDS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges Congress to release Abandoned Mine Reclamation Funds to state agencies for required projects on a timelier basis.

REVIEW NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENT

WHEREAS, the United States department of Agriculture's Nutritional Service Department is recommending to the School Lunch Program administrators that goods determined to be high in sugar, fat and salt should be substituted; and,

WHEREAS, whole milk is recommended to be removed from school feeding programs; and,

WHEREAS, this is not a nutritionally sound approach;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations expend every effort to have the U.S. Department of Agriculture rescind such recommendations and continue to advocate the use of natural and wholesome food products.

SELECTIVE EMBARGOES

WHEREAS, U.S. Presidents of both political parties have imposed selective embargoes on certain agricultural commodities in recent times, intended as sanctions to further foreign policy decisions; and,

WHEREAS, experience has proven conclusively that such embargoes failed to deny the product to the foreign power, have disrupted the normal flow of commerce domestically with negative impact on the agricultural community and have gained the United States a reputation as an unreliable supplier among the trading nations of the world; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations opposes the use of selective embargoes on agricultural commodities.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

WHEREAS, rural electric cooperatives, as private sector businesses, have been working with government for half a century to provide rural America and the agricultural community with much needed quality of life services, beginning with electricity and now including the aiding or developing of rural water and sewage systems, rural development initiatives, as well as distance learning/medical link projects; and,

WHEREAS, rural electric cooperatives have the business expertise, developed from more than 50 years of providing reliable, reasonably priced electricity to rural and agricultural areas, which supplies the foundation to support rural and agricultural infrastructure and development initiatives; and,

WHEREAS, rural electric cooperatives are recognized as the model private-public partnership - a ready made private sector delivery system to supply the basic services that rural communities need to boost their economies. They are family farms and small businesses that help the government help people;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations urges the United States Congress to call upon the nation's 1,000 rural electric cooperatives to help empower rural and agricultural areas with the necessary knowledge, expertise and resources to take control of their economic futures; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations supports the continuance of rural electric cooperative electric and economic development loan and grant programs at funding levels necessary to carry out this rural quality of life agenda.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

DIESEL ENGINES/SULFER

WHEREAS, diesel engines are very efficient and an integral part of many commercial operations, and can be a significant expense for businesses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that diesel emissions should be reduced in a manner that is least burdensome to diesel fuel users; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the EPA should not mandate the production of a third diesel fuel.

TIER 2/GASOLINE SULFER REGULATION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the EPA should base its regulations on National Ambient Air Quality Standards that are justified by sound science and data; and that consumers should not be burdened with excessive costs.