

# Federal Issues Dominate Debate At Missouri Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

JEFFERSON CITY, MO.

Missouri Farm Bureau's 95th annual meeting at the Lake of the Ozarks attracted more than 1,200 Missouri family farmers and ranchers. With the many legislative proposals now before the U.S. Congress and the new government programs and regulations proposed by the Obama Administration, federal issues dominated the discussions of voting delegates in determining the 2010 policy positions of Missouri Farm Bureau.

"Guest speakers addressed issues very concerning to farmers and ranchers, such as Cap and Trade," said Dexter farmer Charles Kruse, Missouri Farm Bureau President. "They addressed many of the myths and charges directed against agriculture which could prove devastating to farmers' ability to produce food and fiber in Missouri and nationwide."

"This led right into our voting delegate session where farmers and ranchers discussed, debated and voted on what our legislative policy would be for the coming year." Kruse said. "More than ever before, farmers and ranchers are literally fearful of what the federal government is planning to do in terms of Cap and Trade, the Clean Water Restoration Act, possible government run federal health care and spending that is out of control."

"The federal government potentially will decide how farmers are allowed to care for their livestock with regards to giving them necessary antibiotics, as well as how farmers are able to apply pesticides to their crops. People are not only concerned, but there's a certain level of fear I've never before seen, and our legislative policy adopted at our meeting strongly reflects their opinions," said Kruse.

Some of the national issues discussed are as follows:

- Voting delegates reaffirmed their strong opposition to Cap and Trade legislation as well as the regulation of greenhouse gases under the Federal Clean Air Act to curb supposed man-made global warming. Proposed laws and regulations under consideration in our nation's capitol will lead to "all pain and no gain" for farmers, American consumers and the U.S. economy.

- Long-standing policy in opposition to national health insurance, or what is currently called the "public option," was reaffirmed.

- Members believe improvements can and should be made in our nation's health care delivery system, but they favor market-based reforms and the elimination of unnecessary government regulations. For instance, voting delegates approved language in support of allowing individuals to purchase insurance policies across state lines.

- Policies were reaffirmed calling for tort reform, price transparency for medical procedures and services, and equity in the Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement rates received by rural doctors and hospitals versus urban health care providers.

- Out of control is one way to describe how our members feel about federal spending, which is why they adopted policies supporting measures to bring fiscal responsibility.

- Voting delegates adopted policy supporting a constitutional amendment to require a federal balanced budget. They also believe a two-thirds majority vote should be needed to increase spending beyond congressional "pay go" rules rather than a three-fifths vote.

- Voting delegates adopted policy in opposition to expanding the scope of the Federal Clean Water Act including removing the word "navigable."

- Language was approved in opposition to requiring farmers and landowners to obtain a Clean Water Act permit to apply chemical pesticides near water when products are applied in compliance with pesticide labeling laws.

- Reaffirming support for permanent repeal of federal estate taxes and outlined measures that should be included in a reform package until permanent repeal can be achieved.

- Supporting modifications in the current milk pricing system to make market prices more timely and transparent.

- Opposing the Congressionally-authorized Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study designed to review the original project purposes based on the Flood Control Act of 1944.

- Supporting a comprehensive plan for the Upper Mississippi River that enhances system wide flood control without creating adverse impacts on existing levees, levee districts, rural communities and metropolitan areas.

- Opposing restrictions on animal health medicines approved as safe by the Food and Drug Administration.

- Opposing EPA's proposed inclusion of projected indirect land use impacts in figuring greenhouse gas emissions from biofuel production and use.

- Delegates also adopted policy calling on the Environmental Protection Agency to reject the petition filed by Humane Society of the United States and other organizations seeking to regulate confined animal feeding operations under the Federal Clean Air Act.

State issues which voting delegates determined policy on are as follows:

- In reference to the recently proposed Humane Society of the United States ballot initiative, Farm Bureau voting delegates adopted a policy stating, "We do not condone the mistreatment of animals in any manner whatsoever and support reasonable and proven standards; at the same time, we oppose any initiative petition or legislation in Missouri that would impose unnecessary and unreasonable regulations on the breeding and raising of animals.

- Citing the economy, market volatility and financial difficulty faced by many farm families, voting delegates adopted policy urging the State Tax Commission not to set higher farmland productivity values used in determining property tax assessments.

- Recognizing the need to upgrade local 911 emergency response capabilities and the decline in revenue generated by landline phones as cell phone traffic increases, voting delegates adopted policy supporting assessing a fee on cell phones to support local 911 emergency response services. Δ



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