



## **Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation's Policies for 2023**

Resolutions adopted by the Voting Delegates of the members of Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation to the 2022 Annual Meeting of the organization.

Massachusetts December 2022

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## SECTION 1 – LABOR/TRANSPORTATION/RURAL LIVING

### GOVERNMENT

#### 101 / Definition of Agriculture

1. We support:
  - 1.1 "Farming" or "agriculture" defined as farming in all of its branches and the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest products upon forest land, the raising of livestock including horses, the keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise, the keeping and raising of poultry, swine, cattle and other domesticated animals used for food purposes, bees, fur-bearing animals, and any forestry or lumbering operations, performed by a farmer, who is hereby defined as one engaged in agriculture or farming as herein defined, or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations, including preparations for market, delivery to storage or to market or to carriers for transportation to market. This is consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 128, Section 1A. 2016 – 36\*R (2001)
  - 1.2 The addition of farm composting, ratities (ostrich, emu & rhea) raised for commercial purposes, the harvest of sunlight for solar energy, wind through turbines and water via hydroelectric and the sequestration of carbon in biomass to the definition of "farming" or agriculture" in state law. 2016 – 34, 2018-27\*R (2009)
  - 1.3 A uniform definition of agritourism for all state agencies, as well, as this practice being considered as a viable agricultural enterprise by all state agencies. 2016 – 35
  - 1.4 The formation of a study commission appointed by the Governor, which includes representatives from agriculture, tourism, municipal government organizations, public health, tax agencies and other relevant stakeholders, to study and recommend agri-tourism legislation for enhancing this sector in the Commonwealth. 2018-26\*R (2015)
  - 1.5 Ratites (ostrich, emu and rhea) raised for commercial purposes and forestry programs being placed under the authority of the Department of Agricultural Resources. 2016 – 90\*R (1998)

#### 102 / Government Organizations and Funding

##### Massachusetts Government

- 1.1 We support:
  - 1.1.1 Farmers being included as members of the Farm Viability Program Final Review Board and would like three farmers to be included as members. 2016 – 55 Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR)
- 1.2 We encourage:
  - 1.2.1 The state to long-term fund this department. 2017 – 53\*R (2002)
- 1.3 We support the transition of the Service Forestry Program, including its staff and necessary resources, into the Department of Agricultural Resources, so all private, natural resource-based business in the Commonwealth are served by a single competent agency. 2016 – 58\*R (2010)
2. Massachusetts 2016 Ballot Question 3 About Animal Husbandry
  - 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 The establishment of a fund by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reimburse farmers' expenses related to bringing facilities up to the new standards. 2016 – 57
- 2.1.2 The immediate ban on importation of products not produced according to standards that were addressed in ballot question 3. This should include, but is not limited to, budgeting for required inspectors within the Attorney General's office. 2016 - 57
- 3. University of Massachusetts Extension and Research Programs
  - 3.1 We encourage:
    - 3.1.1 The long-term funding of UMass Extension and Research. 2017 – 54\*R (2005) and 2017 – 52 \*R (2002)
    - 3.1.2 UMass Extension to maintain full staffing levels and support funding for these positions. 2017 – 52 \*R (2002)
  - 3.2 We support:
    - 3.2.1 The enhancement of agricultural offerings by UMass from within the university or cooperatively with other universities in the northeast university programs. 2018-49 \*R (1997)
    - 3.2.2 UMass reducing its expenditures, particularly in the areas of administration, to direct these monies toward either teaching or tuition reduction. 2018-49\*R (1997)
    - 3.2.3 Efforts to rebuild infrastructure for agricultural research and education in Massachusetts, whether it be through Extension or another entity.
    - 3.2.4 The food and agriculture research, extension and education system must support, build and maintain a critical mass of well-trained scientists in the public sector to ensure that the U.S. remains the leader in global agricultural production while providing a safe, affordable, and nutritious food supply, maintaining a quality environment, and conserving natural resources such as water and soil. An effective and efficient transfer of knowledge and technology for the benefit of agriculture producers and consumers worldwide must be maintained and remain a high priority in future budgets if we are to meet the global challenge of feeding more than 9 billion people by the year 2050. We support: 2018-47\*R (2015)
    - 3.2.5 Ongoing efforts to elevate food, agricultural and natural resources research as a national priority, including partnering with a broad coalition of stakeholders to develop and deliver a unified message calling for moving agricultural research to the forefront of American science; 2018- 47\*R (2015)
    - 3.2.6 Strengthening investments across the board in the U.S. food, agricultural and natural resources research portfolio, including competitive grants, federal and state capacity funding and increased public-private partnerships; 2018-47\*R (2015)
    - 3.2.7 A commitment for increased investment across all federal agencies with significant roles in addressing critical priorities in food, agriculture and natural resources through research and extension. 2018-47\*R (2015)
- 4. USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
  - 4.1 We oppose any closing or consolidation of FSA and/or NRCS offices. 2017 – 55\*R (2005)
  - 4.2 We support:
    - 4.2.1 The abolishment of the Dec. 23, 1985, converted exemption date and replaced by any evidence of past farming as proof of the exemption in relation to NRCS swamp

- buster rules. Penalties should be reduced from all government payments accumulated since the violation to a portion related to the acreage affected. 2017 – 50\*R (2011)
- 4.2.2 A local committee elected by farmers reviewing and making decisions on any work done by NRCS on farms, including compliance reviews. 2017 50\*R (2011)
5. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
- 5.1 We support MFBF's right to review farmers' land contracts with DFW and MFBF's ability to negotiate with DFW to achieve a better balance to help farmers maintain DFW land. 2016 - 56
6. Non-Profit Farms
- 6.1 We support:
- 6.1.1 Policies that provide separate programs and funding sources for non-profit and commercial farms. This will ensure that the programs and grants meet the needs of each group without the need for them to compete against each other. 2017-49 and 2018-51\*R (2015)
- 6.1.2 Separate templates and funding availability classes for non-profit and commercial for-profit farms to ensure that they are not in competition against one another for the same resources and placing one or the other at a disadvantage. 2017-49 and 2018-51\*R (2015)
7. Federal Farm Bill
- 7.1 We support:
- 7.1.1 Specialty Agriculture and its funding in the Federal Farm Bill. 2016-61\*R (2007)

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### 103 / Farm Buildings

1. We oppose:
- 1.1 Building codes for farm buildings and housing construction requiring stamped lumber. This requirement places native lumber at a disadvantage. 2017 – 36\*R (2008)
2. We support:
- 2.1 Farm building structures being classified as non-commercial under an agricultural exemption for building, plumbing and electrical code purposes. This includes using plastic pipe instead of cast iron as the 2012 plumbing code requires. 2018-34\*R (2012) and 2016 – 50\*R (2007)
- 2.2 A revised tax structure on new farm buildings, like New York State, in which farmers have a 10-year exemption on new farm buildings and then are taxed as depreciated, ten-year old buildings. 2018-36\*R (1997)
- 2.3 An exemption or fair method of calculation for real estate taxes on greenhouses. 2018-36\*R (2006)
- 2.4 Efforts to allow agritourism events to be held on farms and in Group U agricultural building, which includes barns and other large spaces, provided that the occupancy of such agricultural buildings for event purposes does not exceed 100 people. 2016 46\*R (2013)

- 2.5 Legislation or policy to create an agricultural farm stand commercial value for tax purposes in line with the current and or seasonal use

104 / Farm Equipment, Motor and Recreational Vehicles

1. Registry of Motor Vehicles

1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Changes to laws and regulations that would allow farmers and wood producers to use their vehicles and trailers at full capacity. 2016 – 47\*R (2010)
- 1.1.2 Efforts to exempt farm tractors from safety inspections. 2018-42\*R (1997)
- 1.1.3 The RMV using a simple registration process for Farm plates that does not require farmers to have a printed document from the Internal Revenue Service stating their Federal Identification Number. 2016 – 48\*R (2010)
- 1.1.4 The RMV amending Farm plate regulations to include the use of Farm Plates on buses to transport farm labor. 2017 – 43\*R (2002)
- 1.1.5 Efforts to reduce confusion with Farm plate registration and motor vehicle safety inspection stickers. 2017 – 42\*R (2002)
- 1.1.6 The use of a notarized bill of sale and title transfer signed under penalties of perjury as enough proof of sales price for sales tax collection purposes. 2017 – 38\*R (2014)
- 1.1.7 A change in the law to require that farm plated vehicles only be charged a fee for overweight permits for the first vehicle, with subsequent permits being issued free or at a reduced rate.

1.2 We oppose:

- 1.2.1 RMV policy that prohibits DBA or Sole Proprietors that have an Employee Identification Number to hold title of motor vehicles in the business name. 2018-40\*R (2012)

2. Off Road Vehicles

2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 An agricultural exemption from the current helmet law for farmers using off road vehicles to perform daily chores. 2017 – 29\*R (2014)
- 2.1.2 Legislation that would require all two, three and four-wheeled and airborne recreational vehicles, including dirt bikes, three and four- wheeled RV's, balloons capable of transporting humans, ultra-light aircraft and mountain bikes, be registered by the Division of Marine and Recreational Vehicles. Additionally, all such vehicles will be required to display legible registration numbers that are purchased and applied at the time of sale and all operators of such vehicles shall carry appropriate insurance while operating off their own property. 2016 – 49 \*R (1998)

3. Trailers

3.1 We support:

- 3.1.1 The use of pup-trailers and like vehicles for the transport of agricultural products, using a farm plate in Massachusetts. 2017- 41\*R (2008)
- 3.1.2 All regulations on trailers with divisible loads, including puptrailers and hay wagons, operating under farm plates being brought into line with those regulations

in neighboring states thus unifying regulations on farm plates with neighboring states to better enable uses of agricultural plates in the state to compete. 2018-41\*R (2009)

4. DOT

4.1 We support:

- 4.1.1 Changes to laws and regulations that would allow farmers and wood producers to use their vehicles and trailers at full capacity. 2016 – 47\*R (2010)
- 4.1.2 A revision to the current process for amending farm plate registrations when a farm operation is transferring to the next actively farming generation or spouse. 2018-39\*R (2015)
- 4.1.3 MA DOT sending the compliance decal list for Farm Plate registration to the same address as the Farm Plate registration renewal simultaneously. 2018-37
- 4.1.4 MFBF working to have Mass RMV/DOT remove the requirement that all non CDL trucks over 10,000 lbs be required to register with the US DOT and apply numbers to their trucks to be eligible for annual inspection. Whereas many farm-plated vehicles only operate Intrastate, they do not meet a federal requirement of the US DOT. The US DOT only requires registration for trucks being operated for Interstate commerce.
- 4.1.5 MFBF working to change the new “2019” changes in the CMR’s which the Mass RMV/DOT made to section 5 requirements to apply for Farm Plates. You are now required to have a heated office with file cabinets and a bathroom which is not attached to your residence and to submit pictures of said facilities with your application for it to be considered. Whereas many farms operate “the office” from the home “kitchen table” this seems to be an onerous requirement for many of us especially new and young farmers.

5. Fuel and Energy

5.1 We support:

- 5.1.1 The use of all alternative energy equipment and systems as farm machinery. Furthermore, we support an agricultural exemption to the Department of Environmental Protection regulations governing the use of biomass equipment and systems. 2017 – 40\*R (2008)
- 5.1.2 Massachusetts Farm Bureau working to facilitate a suspension of the state fuel tax for farmers and those registered as agriculture. This has a great impact on the cost of food prices for all. By allowing a fuel tax break for these farmers you are making it more affordable for the upfront cost.

6. Miscellaneous

- 6.1 We support an amendment to Mass General Law Chapter 140 Section 205A and Section 5.0 or Title 520 to allow an exemption for incidental Agri- tourism/Agri- tainment activities. The activities must be incidental and part of the direct marketing strategy, with the primary purpose being to bring customers to the farm to increase the sale of farm products. 2017 – 37
- 6.2 Right to Repair - The General Court revising Chapter 93K to expand the right to repair protections afforded to automobiles and on-road trucks to all equipment used in growing and harvesting of agricultural products. 2018-35
- 6.3 We support revising MGL Chapter 90F to allow Massachusetts residents holding a junior operator’s license to operate a commercial vehicle in intrastate commerce.



- 6.4 We support amending Chapter 90 Section 7E to specifically allow for the use of emergency lights by veterinarians when responding to emergency calls.
- 6.5 MFBF working with legislators with the assistance of SAM (Snowmobiling Association of Massachusetts) to revise MGL Chapter 90B to allow the purchaser of Off Road Vehicles or Marine Vessels to be able to initially register their vehicle and renew online.

## LABOR

### 105 / Labor

- 1. Definition of Agricultural Workers
  - 1.1 We support the definition of agricultural worker including on-farm retail sales, on-farm processing and handling of products consolidated on a farm. 2016 – 66
  - 1.2 We support legislation to make the definition of farm labor consistent through all laws of the Commonwealth and such definition be consistent with the definition of “Farm Labor” in the Fair Labor Standards Act. 2019- 7
- 2. H2A Program
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 Changes to the H2A program even if comprehensive labor/immigration reforms are not part of the legislation. 2017 – 62\*R (2005)
    - 2.1.2 Immigration and H2A reform that includes limited amnesty to the present work force. Additionally, it should include border security, access to legal foreign workers and should not result in a delay in sourcing workers. 2017 – 63\*R (2005)
    - 2.1.3 All states being required to comply with federal regulations concerning the H2A program and non-U.S. citizens. 2017 – 62 \*R (2005)
  - 2.2 We oppose:
    - 2.2.1 Employers being placed in the position of being the enforcers of immigration policy. 2017 – 63\*R (2005)
  - 2.3 We will work comprehensively with the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation and the New England Apple Council to enlist their support to amend and change the current H2A labor program. 2016 – 67 \*R (1998)
- 3. Overtime
  - 3.1 We support exempting retail farm store employees from overtime for any work week in which an employee has worked less than 40 hours, regardless of which day of the week that employee has worked. 2017 – 61\*R (2002) and 2016 -64
  - 3.2 We support legislation that would make the agricultural overtime exemption more inclusive as the recent Supreme Judicial Court ruling has given a very narrow interpretation of the agricultural overtime exemption. 2019-4
  - 3.3 We also support legislation that would bring the agricultural minimum wage equal to the standard minimum wage, if the agricultural overtime exemption is made more inclusive as stated in 3.2. 2019-4
- 4. Youth Labor
  - 4.1 We support:
    - 4.1.1 Laws that allow for a youth/training wage. 2016 – 65

- 4.1.2 A tax credit that ensures all costs associated with hiring and training of youth labor to be considered a tax set off equal to 150 percent of such costs. 2018-57\*R (2015)
- 5. Volunteer Labor
  - 5.1 We support:
    - 5.1.1 Amendments to applicable laws, regulations and policies to allow for volunteer, unpaid labor on farms. 2017 – 60\*R (2014)
    - 5.1.2 AFBF’s policy – Section 136.27 – Amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to allow volunteerism on for-profit agricultural organizations. 2017 – 60\*R (2014)
- 6. Offshore Labor
  - 6.1 We support the creation of a multi-sector temporary guest worker program that includes agriculture, but only if the requirements are no more stringent for one sector than another. 2016 – 68\*R (2004)
    - 6.1.1 Under the creation of this program, we oppose:
      - 6.1.1.1 Requiring employers to pay more than prevailing wage rates for a particular occupation and region, if required to pay above the Fair Labor Standards Act minimum. 2016 – 68\*R (2004)
      - 6.1.1.2 Requiring housing or transportation, or the hiring of domestic workers after the contract period has begun. 2016 – 68\*R (2004)
      - 6.1.1.3 Placing a limit on the number of temporary worker visas that may be issued or guaranteeing payment of any fraction of the temporary workers’ pay for work that has not been performed. 2016 – 68\*R (2004)
      - 6.1.1.4 Expanding the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) to employers of agricultural temporary workers or otherwise providing those workers with a private right of action in state or federal courts. 2016 – 68\*R (2004)
      - 6.1.1.5 Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H2A visa workers. 2016 - 68\*R (2004)
- 7. Massachusetts Department of Agriculture
  - 7.1 We support MDAR advocating for the availability of quality farm labor, by guaranteeing a workable and sustainable guest worker program for farmers to utilize on their farms. 2017 – 59

## AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND YOUTH

### 106 / Agricultural Education and Youth Programs

- 1. Agricultural High Schools
  - 1.1 We support full funding for agricultural vocational courses at Smith Vocational Agricultural High School, Bristol Agricultural High School, Essex Agricultural Technical High School and Norfolk County Agricultural High School. 2017 – 2 R\* (1996) and 2016 – 2\*R (1998)
  - 1.2 Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation supports changes to 520 CMR 6.00: Hoisting machinery regulatory authority to allow students enrolled in Chapter 74 approved career and technical education programs to operate hoisting equipment under the supervision of licensed vocational technical education teachers.
- 2. Insurance Programs

- 2.1 We support efforts by the state as well as the insurance industry to create a Farm Safety program to educate youth and seasonal employees about the hazards related to the agricultural industry. 2016 – 1 \* R (2013)
- 3. Legislative
  - 3.1 We support:
    - 3.1.1 Efforts to encourage Massachusetts legislators to visit farms in their counties through the year to become more educated about agriculture. 2018 – 1 \* R (2003)
    - 3.1.2 Legislation that would repay 75 percent of student loans for large animal vets that practice in the state of Massachusetts for a minimum of 5 years. 2018-65 \*R (2009)
    - 3.1.3 Elimination of tax on awards made through the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. 2016-59 \*R (2013)
    - 3.1.4 Educating the next generation of students in science, math and technology to maintain Massachusetts' status as a leader in agricultural innovation. 2018 – 2\*R (2006)
    - 3.1.5 Loan forgiveness for students who graduate with an agricultural degree from an accredited institute of higher education if they are involved in the business of agriculture in Massachusetts for 10 years. This follows New York state which offers a four-year student loan forgiveness program for in state students. 2019-5
- 4. Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom
  - 4.1 We support Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom (MAC) program. 2018 – 2\*R(2006)
- 5. Massachusetts School Lunches
  - 5.1 We support locally sourced agriculture products for school lunches.

#### 107 / 4-H

- 1. We support:
  - 1.1 Full funding of the 4-H programs that is needed for day-to-day operations. 2018-33\*R (2015)

#### 108 / Fairs

- 1. We support:
  - 1.1 Agri-tourism events and agricultural fairs enjoying the same exemptions as Fenway Park and Gillette Stadium enjoy in relation to liquor sales.2017 – 34\*R (2014)
  - 1.2 The reinstatement of the Agricultural Purposes Fund to its FY 1989 level and prevention of further disintegration of the Division. 2017 – 35\*R (1996)
  - 1.3 Efforts to mainstream all agricultural fairs into the furtherance of an urban populace and consuming public's knowledge of the importance of Massachusetts agricultural industry in the production of safe, high-quality foodstuffs and the preservation of the land itself as well as the kind of life it represents. 2017 – 35\*R (1996)
  - 1.4 Legislation that prohibits municipal regulations of agricultural fairs providing education and entertainment to the general public provided that, for issues related to animal welfare and health that: the fairs are in compliance with the MDAR Blue Book Guidelines; animal confinements and enclosure are in compliance with state and federal Industry standards; permits from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife are in compliance for all animals requiring such permits; USDA inspections and permits as required; licenses and permits required by professional trade organizations; availability

of veterinarian that provides scheduled or random inspections and who will report to the appropriate authorities as needed; and a complaint process is defined and publicized for the public to follow. 2019-6

- 1.5 We will call on the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives to appropriate a significant amount of the \$4.9 billion made available to Massachusetts through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 to Massachusetts' agricultural fairs to assist them with deferred fairgrounds maintenance and needed capital improvements.

## NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS

### 109 / Farming Opportunities

1. We support:
  - 1.1 The study and legislation of possible ways to enhance new opportunities for new farmers, expanding farm businesses, and others, through state grants, 'green payments,' and/or other means. 2016 – 51 \*R (2001)
2. MFBF shall explore the possibility of offering entry and beginning farms access to accounting and financial counseling resources. Furthermore, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation will investigate an alliance with the Farm Bureaus in other northeastern states, for the purpose of instituting such a plan or service. 2017 – 82\*R (2005)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### 110 / Communications

1. We support efforts to educate farmers and ranchers regarding the risks exposure to tick born illness vectors and proper protective practices in the field, and also provide a voice of support for more research to advance treatment protocols, and finally to advocate for tick born illness treatment and care to be included in medical insurance coverage. 2017 - 7
2. MDAR and others use a portion of funds released for farmer mental health issues to educate the public towards reducing wasteful and destructive activities by visitors and thereby creating respect for the farmer and the farm's role in the food supply.

### 111 / Marketing & Farm Signs

1. Nutritional Assistance programs.
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 The Healthy Incentive programs and will work to ensure that farmers market coupons/HIP program funds are used to purchase nutritious, wholesome food, including eggs, meats, dairy, poultry and more. 2017 – 70\* R (2014) and 2017 – 69
    - 1.1.2 Working towards a rolling open enrollment for farmer participation of the Health Incentives Program that allows farmers to be qualified to accept
2. Farm Signs
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 Right-To-Farm signage being placed along state highways. 2018-48\*R (2012)
3. Animal Processing Facilities

- 3.1 We support the establishment of new livestock processing facilities in parts of the state which currently need them and encourage the orderly shipment of product to these facilities to ease the seasonal glut, which jeopardizes their economic viability. We also support the development of a more diverse slaughter and meat processing infrastructure including, but not limited to, Mobile Slaughter units and small-scale slaughter facilities. 2016 – 74 \*R (2010)
- 4. Wineries and Breweries
  - 4.1 We support legislation and additional efforts to ensure that brewery and winery products or businesses that are marketed as or presented as being associated with “farms” use local and/or regionally produced inputs in their products. 2017 – 70\*R (2014)
- 5. Farmers Markets
  - 5.1 We support legislation that limits liabilities of farmers markets and farmers who attend those markets to one of gross negligence as now exists for Pick Your Own farms. 2017 – 71 \*R (2008)

## 112 / Policy and Organization

- 1. Strategic Planning
  - 1.1 We will undertake a membership study to define challenges and develop a plan of action and growth for the next 100 years. Said plan should consider finances, membership, staffing, service needs and opportunities, and any other subject that supports the organizations growth and effectiveness. County Farm Bureaus will be encouraged to undertake the same strategic planning process. 2016 - 83
  - 1.2 We will take the lead when applicable in coordinating and unifying the promotional, educational and political goals of all agricultural groups in Massachusetts. 2016 – 20\*R (2004) and 2016 – 86 \*R (1998)
    - 1.2.1 Additionally, we will network with other agricultural associations and commodity groups to streamline operations and eliminate duplicate efforts. 2016 – 20\*R (2004)
  - 1.3 We support:
    - 1.3.1 The concept of sustainable agriculture encompassing the use of approved agricultural technology and allows farmers to use or not use approved technologies as they determine what is most appropriate for their farm and market. 2018-66 \*R (2009)
- 2. Committees
  - 2.1 We will have at least three advisory committees: cannabis, apiary and fruit, vegetables and flower committees to provide the Board of Directors with recommendations on these topics. 2017 – 76 and 2017-77 and 2016 – 18 \*R (2013)
  - 2.2 We will promote, support and encourage the growth of the young farmers and ranchers committees. 2017 – 79\*R (2011)
- 3. Membership
  - 3.1 The membership committee will work to find discounts for members on propane and oil. 2017 – 80 \*R (2011)
  - 3.2 MFBF will encourage and support member participation in the political process. 2016 – 87\*R (2007)
  - 3.3 We encourage all members who sell produce through “pick your own” and farm stands offer a 10 percent discount to Farm Bureau members. A sign advertising this benefit along with “how to become a member/contact information” would be provided to participating farmers/growers.

#### 4. Partnership With American National

- 4.1 We encourage American National to advertise on the first page of their invoices in bold the savings one receives by being a Farm Bureau member as well as what the savings could have been for a non-Farm Bureau member. The purpose of this is to encourage their clients to join Farm Bureau. 2017-78 \* R (2014).
- 4.2 We also will encourage efforts with American National Insurance to strengthen ties and to encourage a stronger bond which either requires membership in Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation every year or encourages membership in Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation through insurance discounts or some other incentive for Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation Members. 2016-63 \*R (2004)

#### 113 / Public Relations

1. We will work to give agriculture a more positive image through public relations efforts, including but not limited to the production of a documentary. 2017 – 87 and 2016-98 \*R (1998)
2. We will encourage the use of Massachusetts farm grown or produced products that are in season at all MFBF functions. 2017 – 81 \*R (1996)
3. We will establish a voluntary regional “speaker Bureaus/Speaker Faculty” to provide non-profit (and other) organizations speakers for meetings and forums. Speakers/Faculty could be available for both remote and in-person meeting free of charge to these organizations. Participating members (Faculty) would be both listed with their area of expertise on the MFBF website and published at least bi-annually within the monthly newsletter. In addition, those that have provided presentations will be highlighted/thanked both at region meetings, newsletters and each year at the Annual Meeting.
4. Provide beginning farmer fact sheets with information on how to deal and where to appeal unreasonable mandates from zoning, public health, and other state and local regulators.

## SECTION 2 – FARM POLICY

### COMMODITY POLICY

#### 201 / Dairy

##### 1. Producer Support Programs

###### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 The continuation of the dairy tax credit and other support programs, including those recommended by the Dairy Task Force and other sources. 2016-30
- 1.1.2 The Dairy Farm Preservation Act and the implementation of all of its programs and elements. 2018-25 \*R (2009)
- 1.1.3 Funding for the Dairy Diversification Grant to help dairy farms to diversify their operations and make their farms more financially viable. 2018-23
- 1.1.4 Increasing the amount of grants available to dairy farmers for infrastructure improvement.

###### 1.2 We oppose:

- 1.2.1 Government supported margin insurance. 2016-31 \*R (2010)

##### 2. Raw Milk

###### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 Legislation, regulation and state policy that allows farmers to deliver, personally or through a contractor, raw milk from their own farm directly to the customer, with MDAR as the regulatory authority overseeing these activities 2016-32 \*R (2010)
- 2.1.2 The farmers' right to legally sell raw milk. 2018-24 \*R (2009)
- 2.1.3 MDAR as the regulatory authority over raw milk. 2018-24 \*R (2009)

##### 3. Dairy Promotion

###### 3.1 We support:

- 3.1.1 Local labeling programs, including “Locally Fresh” or “Commonwealth Quality.” 2017-20 \*R (2011)

#### 202 / Apiculture

##### 1. American Farm Bureau Federation

###### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 The creation and implementation of an apiary committee at AFBF. 2016- 18 \*R (2013)

##### 2. Public Agencies

###### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 Efforts to work with public agencies that manage land suitable to bee culture to allow beekeeper access. 2018-10 \*R (2012)

#### 203 / Equine

##### 1. American Farm Bureau Federation

###### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Making equine 307(3) of AFBF policy book, which reads in full “the classification of horses as livestock” a Priority issue for American Farm Bureau Federation. 2017-32 \*R (2008)
- 1.1.2 Working with USDA and compile equine-related data to be published with other commodity reports. These will aid the equine community, their suppliers and



related businesses to better serve the industry and to further our legislative goals.  
2016-45 \*R (2001)

- 1.1.3 The classification of all commercial horse operations as commercial agricultural enterprises which enjoy the same tax exemption as other agricultural enterprises.  
2017-97 \*R (1996)

## 2. Massachusetts policy

### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 Removal of requirements that riding instructors be licensed in Massachusetts; or changes in law that would provide benefits to either consumers, instructors or the quine community and ensures enforcement of licensing requirements. 2017-30 \*R (2014)
- 2.1.2 Authorization by the Department of Conservation & Recreation allowing horseback riding and equine driving on all lands which are otherwise open for public recreational use. 2016-43 \*R (1998)
- 2.1.3 The classification of all commercial horse operations as commercial agricultural enterprises which enjoy the same tax exemption as other agricultural enterprises.  
2017-97 \*R (1996)
- 2.1.4 The development of thoroughbred racing and equine facilities.

### 2.2 We oppose:

- 2.2.1 Legislative efforts to impose regulations that adults (18 and over) wear protective headgear while participating in equine activities. 2017- 31 \*R (2014)
- 2.2.2 Efforts to limit the use of motorized powered equipment in equine dentistry to veterinarians. 2016-41
- 2.2.3 Efforts to categorize horses as companion animals in the Commonwealth 2016-42 \*R (2013)

## 3. Regional policy

### 3.1 We support:

- 3.1.1 Working with State Farm Bureaus of New England and New York, and appropriate state agencies to write regulations which either allow for one test for Equine Infections Anemia (Coggins test) to be valid in all six New England states and the state of New York or have a reciprocal agreement between the states allowing all New England equines to be subject to the same requirements as in-state equine.  
2017-33 \*R (1999)

## 4. Insurance

### 4.1 We support:

- 4.1.1 The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation Equine Committee working with the insurance industry to review existing horse farm coverages and insurance programs and make recommendations to the company regarding suggested modifications. 2016-44 \*R (1998)

## 204 / Forestry

### 1. Department of Conservation and Recreation

#### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Changes in policy making small tracts of DCR land available for timber harvesting.  
2017-47 \*R (2014)

### 2. Promotion

#### 2.1 We support:



- 2.1.1 The development of a fund, created through the legislature and administered by the Bureau of Forestry within the Department of and Recreation, specifically dedicated to the development of strategies and grant programs as well as the promotion of markets within the Commonwealth which focus specifically on utilizing the plethora of low-grade wood presently found unmarketable. 2016-54 and 2017- 46
- 2.1.2 Creation of a piece of economic stimulus legislation directed at the forestry industry, such as the one proposed by Representatives Guyer and Kulik in 2008, which would include but not be limited to: conservation easements for sawmill sites as renewable energy sites; establishment of a Grant and Loan Fund for Power Supply, Green Energy, and Equipment; as well as tax credits with 10-year carry forward provisions for: development of a forest viability plan with a no-development covenant; new technology and the modernizing of infrastructure; individuals starting a business in sawmilling or timber harvesting; forest re-planting; investments in biomass, combined heat and power infrastructure, and wind energy infrastructure for use in sawmilling or timber harvesting; and Massachusetts sustainable forest grown wood chips sold to biomass/biofuel plants. 2017-48 \*R (2011)
- 2.1.3 Working with Massachusetts Forest Alliance on the legislative agenda to support forestry on both state and private land. 2019 - 9
- 2.1.4 MFBF work with legislators to create a new Native Lumber Production Grant and Technical Assistance Program to be overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to provide economic assistance to native Massachusetts lumber manufacturers also engaged in the growing and harvesting of timber in modernizing their existing operations.

#### 205 / Livestock (Animal Health and Welfare)

##### 1. Controlled Substance Act

###### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 An amendment to this Act that would allow a veterinarian to transport and dispense controlled substances in the usual course of veterinary practice outside of the registrant's registered principal place of business or professional practice, so that a registrant who is a veterinarian shall not be required to have a separate registration in order to transport and dispense controlled substances in the usual course of veterinary practice at a site other than the registrant's registered principal place of business or professional practice, so long as the site of dispensing is located in a State where the veterinarian is licensed to practice veterinary medicine 2016-15 \*R (2013)

##### 2. Burial of Deceased Animals

###### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 Efforts to work on levels to ensure proper burial of deceased animals to be allowed an option. 2016-17 \*R (2007)

##### 3. Slaughter

- 3.1 We support authorizing DAR or DPH to enter into an agreement with USDA to inspect slaughter facilities.

## 206 / Aquaculture

1. We support excluding shellfish aquaculture from the term “seamen” under the Jones Act (Section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act), provided that state workers compensation insurance is available to that worker.
2. We support petitioning the Steamship Authority to extend Excursion Fares to all agricultural producers for all trips involving the transportation of farm products or inputs, as well as prioritizing the loading of all farm vehicles with livestock or perishable goods.
3. We support allowing freshly harvested oyster samples to be provided to participants on paid farm tours where a receipt for the tour can serve as harvest documentation for the oyster sale.
3. We support either the provision of time and resources from FDA for the implementation of the new NSSP mooring area guidance, or FDA must allow State Shellfish Control Agencies to assess the pollution impact of mooring areas based on actual circumstances and data rather than assumed risk.
4. We support the inclusion of shellfish aquaculture into the USDA organic certification program.

## FOOD: PROTECTION, QUALITY AND SAFETY

### 207 / Biotechnology

1. We support:
  - 1.1 preemptive legislation, precluding local authorities from regulating seed and crops. 2017-6 \*R (2005)
  - 1.2 embracing the benefits of agri-biotech developments as positive for Massachusetts agriculture and consumers. 2016-19 \*R (2001)
2. We oppose:
  - 2.1 state regulation of agri-biotechnology and urge that proper oversight of such research and development rests with federal agencies such as FDA, USDA and EPA. 2016-19 \*R (2001)

### 208 / Food Safety

1. Apple Cider
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 The right of Massachusetts apple producer to make and sell unpasteurized apple cider. 2018-44 \*R (1997)
    - 1.1.2 A literature review and analysis of scientific data and studies as to the published benefits from drinking cider. 2018-45 \*R (1997)
    - 1.1.3 Exploring the process of initiating a Massachusetts Farm Cidery license, similar to the New York Farm Cidery license. 2018-41 Food Safety Regulations
  - 1.2 We support:
    - 1.2.1 Efforts of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, UMass Extension, and commodity groups to help growers adopt Best Management Practices, Good Agricultural Practices, Commonwealth Quality and other similar voluntary programs designed to maintain or improve food safety and environmental quality. 2017-45 \*R (2008)
  - 1.3 Food importation

- 1.3.1 We support strengthen restrictions on the importation of agricultural commodities from other countries, especially with respect to allowing material in soil to be imported. 2018-21 \*R (2003)

## CROP INSURANCE/RISK MANAGEMENT

### 209 / Crop and Livestock Damage

#### 1. Department of Fish and Wildlife

##### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Assistance from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, or another state or federal agency, to offset the cost of deer fencing. 2017- 11 \*R (2011) and 2017-19 \*R (1999)
- 1.1.2 Expansion of the list of those who may kill nuisance wildlife on a farm, under a nuisance permit from the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, beyond immediate family and full-time employees, to include trained and licensed hunters operating under the farm owner's direction. 2017-12 \*R (2008)
- 1.1.3 The state allowing the farmer to keep deer without having to submit a report to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. 2017-19 \*R (1999) and 2016-24
- 1.1.4 Hearings held by the Department of Fish and Game to consider holding black bear season concurrent with deer season. 2018- 19 \*R (2012)
- 1.1.5 Writing to the director of Mass Wildlife, Mark Tisa, that all grants be stopped from being issued to any organization that has opposed his department in past legislation or any town or city that does not allow hunting or trapping. 2018-46
- 1.1.6 Creating a lifetime sporting license for residents of Massachusetts to promote interest in sporting among younger residents to control wildlife through hunting, fishing, and trapping.

#### 2. Bears

##### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 Allowing the baiting of black bears. 2017-13 (2002)
- 2.1.2 Extending the current hunting season on black bears. 2017-13 (2002)
- 2.1.3 Reinstating the allowed use of hounds to hunt bears in Massachusetts. 2017-14 \*R (2002)
- 2.1.4 Increasing the number of bear permits allowed to farmers for use on their own farm, based on analysis of bear populations and need. 2018-

#### 3. Beavers

##### 3.1 We support:

- 3.1.1 Allowing trappers to return to the safe use of conibear traps to catch beaver, and thus eliminate any current restrictions on such traps. 2017- 15 \*R (2002)
- 3.1.2 The development of a strategy to bring the beaver population to manageable levels. 2018-22\*R (2000)
- 3.1.3 By-right legislation establishing pre-existing "normal" water levels as a right upon the abandonment of a site by a beaver colony. 2018-22 \*R (2000)

#### 4. Birds

##### 4.1 We support:

- 4.1.1 Allowing special permits for the hunting of migratory crows in corn by non-farm employees during the months of May and June. 2017-16 \*R (1996)

- 4.1.2 The use of chemical bird repellent by farmers. 2017-16 \*R (1996)
- 4.1.3 The ability of farmers or their agents to hunt birds and animals causing
- 5. Deer
  - 5.1 We support:
    - 5.1.1 The state establishing a fund to pay for deer damage on farms. 2017-19 \*R (1999)
    - 5.1.2 The state allowing farmers to rent their land to a hunter or group of hunters to kill deer during the off-season. 2017-19 \*R (1999)
    - 5.1.3 Increasing the number of deer permits allowed to farmers for use on their own farm, based on analysis of deer populations and need. 2018-
    - 5.1.4 Allowing rifles for deer hunting, like Connecticut, New York and Vermont. 2018-16
    - 5.1.5 Requesting a change to the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife's "Farmer and Landowner Antlerless Deer Permit Policy" to 1) reduce the landowner acreage requirement from 300 to 50 acres; 2) reduce the farmer acreage requirement from 50 to 25 acres; 3) eliminate the requirement that the farmer and/or their immediate family reside on the land; 4) a reduction of the requirement that 50% of a farmer's income be derived from the land in question to 30%. 2019-1
    - 5.1.6 Increasing the antlerless deer permits in all zones west of the Connecticut River as the last two winters have been so mild that deer population has increased more than the permit reflect. Zones 1-4 have an increased population of 20-25%. 2019-3
- 6. Leghold Traps
  - 6.1 We support:
    - 6.1.1 Amending existing law to possession of leghold traps by permit only. 2017-17 \*R (1996)
    - 6.1.2 A leghold trap buy-back program where the Division of Fish and Wildlife hold these traps in trust. 2017-17 \*R (1996)
- 7. Miscellaneous
  - 7.1 We support:
    - 7.1.1 Allowing farmers to designate specific off-farm persons to cull nuisance wildlife out of season on specific dates and times provide that complete records of such events are kept by the farmer. 2016-24
    - 7.1.2 Repeal of the ban on Sunday hunting in Massachusetts. 2016- 25
    - 7.1.3 Efforts with the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council and other to develop an effective crop insurance program to compensate Massachusetts farmers for wildlife crop damage and to help to maintain open land for sportsmen. 2016-29 \*R (1998)
    - 7.1.4 Expansion of the squirrel season. 2018-18 \*R (2012)
    - 7.1.5 The General Court revising MGL Chapter 131 to include the provision of lifetime sportsmen licenses for both residents and non-residents for hunting, fishing and trapping. 2018-17

## PEST MANAGEMENT

### 210 / Asian Longhorn Beetle

- 1. We support:
  - 1.1 Legislation to protect Massachusetts from further outbreaks Asian Longhorn Beetle, by prohibiting the use of untreated wood pallets from other countries that we know have the Asian Longhorn Beetle. 2017-72 \*R (2008)

- 1.2 Strengthened inspections on wood products coming from countries where Asian Longhorn Beetle is endemic to protect the U.S. forest resources. 2017- 72 \*R (2008)

## 211 / Pesticides

1. Disposal
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 An affordable and economical amnesty program for the disposal of unused or outdated pesticides. 2018-63 \*R (1997) and 2017-73 \*R (2008)
2. Integrated Pest Management
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 Promotion of IPM research and implementation. 2016-78 \*R (1998)
3. Certification
  - 3.1 We support:
    - 3.1.1 The creation of a new pesticide certification category, which has fees and re-certification requirements consistent with other private certifications, for diverse farms so that there is only one certification needed for said operations with credits that can be gleaned from any fruit or vegetable meeting giving credits. 2016-77
4. Pesticide Board
  - 4.1 We support:
    - 4.1.1 The appointment of members to the Pesticide Board who are unbiased and objective and will include competent scientists from relevant fields and an equal number of farmers. 2017-74 \*R (1996)
    - 4.1.2 The continuation of the regulatory structure through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and the Pesticide Board for the regulation of all pesticides and their sales, storage, and applications in the Commonwealth. 2016-81 \*R (2004)
5. Forest pests
  - 5.1 We support:
    - 5.1.1 The implementation of a spray program by the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Agricultural Resources to eradicate forest pests on both private and state lands. 2017-75 \*R (2005)

## FARM POLICY/FARM PROGRAMS

### 212 / Agricultural Commissions

1. We support:
  - 1.1 The establishment of Agricultural Commissions in towns that don't have one and encouraging county members to be active on their local town Ag Commissions. 2017-1 \*R (2005)
  - 1.2 Agricultural Commissions becoming members of Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. 2017-1 \*R (2005)

### 213 / Conservation and Environment

1. Nutrient Management Rules and Regulations
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 Ensuring that manure and nutrient regulations are farmer-friendly and in line with other northeast states. 2017-8 \*R (2014)

- 1.1.2 Legislation to help defray the cost of manure and nutrient regulations and have MDAR work with farmers to maintain compliance. 2017-8 \*R (2014)
- 2. Composting and Recycling
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 Expansion of the Massachusetts bottle deposit bill to include water bottles and juice containers. 2016-21 \*R (2013)
    - 2.1.2 Maintaining the use of livestock manure for farm use and preventing the classification of animal manure as hazardous waste. 2016-22 \*R (2007)
    - 2.1.3 A beneficial use designation by the Department of Environmental Protection for street sweepings to be used on farms. 2018-13 \*R (2012)
- 3. Wetlands Protection Act
  - 3.1 We support:
    - 3.1.1 Reinstitution of the Farmland Advisory Committee established in the Wetlands Protection Act. 2019-14 \*R (2012)
- 4. Soil
  - 4.1 We support:
    - 4.1.1 Efforts, including those in the regulatory and legislative arenas, to create and improve farmland through the use of fill and constructed topsoil. 2017-9 \*R (2011)
    - 4.1.2 County soil testing and mapping to the same level of detail and accuracy, especially those not updated the last ten years, thus giving a uniform soil analysis base for all uses in all counties and that all counties be kept up to date. 2017-10 \*R (2011)
- 5. Storm or flood water fees
  - 5.1 We oppose:
    - 5.1.1 Efforts to impose storm or flood water fees on pervious surfaces associated with farm or forest land, and work to implement policies at the local, state, and federal level that prevent such fees on pervious surfaces associated with farm and forest land. 2018- 12\*R(2015)
- 6. Carbon
  - 6.1 We support:
    - 6.1.1 that MFBF work with legislators to fund an Office of Agricultural Climate Specialist within the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources with a legislative mandate that such office must garner the advice of an advisory board inclusive of both public officials as well as one participant in commercial agriculture from each geographic county in Massachusetts as well as one individual representing the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation.

## FARM VIABILITY

### 214 / Livestock

- 1. We support
  - 1.1 Extending the approach taken with the Dairy Task Force and extending the work and build upon the result to reach other commodities. 2016-52 \*R (2007)
  - 1.2 The creation of a panel of experts to develop guidance on appropriate shelter for livestock, which will serve as a resource to farmers, humane organizations and regulators. This panel shall be comprised of the State Veterinarian, farmers,

representative of local humane organizations, the Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association and Tufts/Friedman School of Veterinary Medicine. 2018-9

## 215 / Grants and Loans

### 1. Loans

#### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Adding “farmers” and “ranchers” to the list of professionals covered by the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. 2017-56 and 2018- 50\*(2015)
- 1.1.2 Allowing off-farm income to be considered towards the calculation of loan paybacks in the same way they are now used for grant eligibility. 2018-52\*R (2009)
- 1.1.3 A government program that allows farmers to secure low interest loans for buildings so that farmers can operate successfully. 2018-54 \*R (2003)
- 1.1.4 The promotion of competitive agricultural lending in the Northeast by increasing the number of lending institutions with competitive low interest rates, the ability to handle FSA guarantees, and which are willing to work with farmers and the agricultural and forestry communities on short and long-term growth projects. This could include working with FSA to provide local and regional banks with additional training or other resources needed. 2018-53 \*R (2009)
- 1.1.5 Policy changes that would provide agricultural producers, commercial fishermen, farm and fishing-related and rural businesses and communities with broader access to financing by the cooperative Farm Credit System. 2018-56 \*R (2006)

### 2. Grants

#### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 The inclusion of biomass systems to existing tax incentives and grants available to other sustainable energy alternatives. 2017- 58 \*R (2008)
- 2.1.2 Removal of matching fund requirements for public grants and loans intended to help small farmers, and in the interim allow in kind contributions like labor to be applied to matching fund considerations. 2018-52 \*R (2009)
- 2.1.3 Streamlining of state grant application processes. 2016-60 \*R (2004)
- 2.1.4 The elimination of state and federal taxes on government grants. 2018- 85\*R
- 2.1.5 Establishing a statewide grant program to assist farms in preparing to meet the challenges of the future. Such grants would be used to establish or renew agricultural production in orchards, vegetable operations, farm stands, animal agriculture by funding a new replacement facilities and growing systems including plant materials, building or equipment. 2019-10

### 3. Conservation Restrictions

#### 3.1 We support:

- 3.1.1 Expanding eligibility for stewardship and restoration cost-share programs to land under a Conservation Restrictions where agriculture is allowed on those lands, and where the funding will be used to support agricultural uses. 2017-57

## 216 / Insurance

### 1. Worker's Compensation

#### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Changes to existing law so that when full recovery of a workers claim under a worker's compensation policy can be made, no experience modification or ARAP charge be made to the employer's policy. 2018-55 \*R (1997)
- 2. Specialty Products
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 Efforts by our organization, USDA Risk Management Agency, USDA FSA, MDAR and others to review, design and fund specialty products to meaningfully provide a safety net in times of adverse conditions that is designed for the Northeast and is understandable, affordable and accessible. 2016-62
    - 2.1.2 The development t of a new crop insurance product to be based on climate conditions for trial in the Northeast.



## SECTION 3 – ENERGY/TAXES/PROPERTY RIGHTS

### ENERGY

#### 301 / Energy

##### 1. Electricity

###### 1.1 We support:

- 1.1.1 Efforts to have the lowest available electricity rates applied to farm enterprises, or to establish an agricultural rate which is significantly lower than the commercial rates. 2017-21
- 1.1.2 Legislation amending the present agricultural energy discount law to increase that discount to 20 percent and eliminate uses charges and/or transfer farms to residential. 2017-24 and 2016- 39 \*R (2007)
- 1.1.3 Revisions to MGL Chapter 164, Section 139 to designate agricultural net metering facility aggregate capacity limits as 8% of each investor owned utility's historic peak load and be it resolved that MFBF will work with legislators to revise MGL Chapter 164, Section 139 to guarantee Class III Agricultural Net Metering Projects reimbursement for the Distribution Charge as part of their Net Metering Credits. 2017-22
- 1.1.4 Legislative and non-legislative efforts to create a scenario where, for projects which produce more than 500 KW annually, the utility company which owns the lines to which the farm connects will be responsible for the costs of connecting the farm production to the grid. Further, the farm shall repay 50 percent of the costs of the connection during the subsequent 10 years, with no interest. 2016-38 \*R (2010)

##### 2. Renewable Energy

###### 2.1 We support:

- 2.1.1 Legislation that would require Massachusetts regulated utilities to interconnect energy projects owned or operated by agricultural producers within 90 days of completion of full payment for any interconnection related costs save major infrastructure upgrades and that requires regulated utilities to reimburse said agricultural producers for the kilowatt hours of electric power which they were deprived reimbursement for if connected after said 90 days. 2017- 23
- 2.1.2 Legislation that creates a sales tax exemption for equipment directly related to any solar, wind powered, heat pump, anaerobic digestion, geothermal, or efficient biomass system, which is being utilized as a primary or auxiliary power system for the purposes of heating or otherwise supplying electric power needs of any structures used for an agricultural purpose, including equine businesses. 2017-25
- 2.1.3 The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, particularly the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, encouraging the use of renewable energy on farms 2017-27 \*R (2011)
- 2.1.4 Uniform guidelines for promoting and construction of renewable energy facilities on farms. 2017-27 \*R (2011)
- 2.1.5 Investigating alternative energy production and procurement techniques and technologies and possible abatements to help farms. 2017-29 \*R (2005)
- 2.1.6 The integration of integrate all forms of renewable energy systems, including wind turbines, solar, hydro and Bio Mass Facilities, into the language of the Mass

- General Law which grants zoning exemptions to agricultural machinery and structures. 2018-31 \*R (2006)
- 2.1.7 A state law preventing individual municipalities from adopting bylaws forbidding or hindering the use of sustainable energy systems in or on agricultural operations unless said operation present a clear and abiding danger to the community. 2018-32 \*R (2006) and 2017-27 \*R (2011)
  - 2.1.8 Favorable legislation for renewable energy as determined by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors. 2016-40 \*R (2007)
  - 2.1.9 Working with legislators to pass legislation providing for an agricultural net metering tariff for agricultural energy projects up to 5 megawatts in scale. This increase in the cap from 2 megawatts would show Massachusetts' support of agricultural net metering.
  - 2.1.10 Working with legislators to add language to MGL92A to limit the interconnection costs assessed to residents of the Commonwealth seeking access to the utility grid to \$50.00 per kilowatt AC of interconnected capacity and to require that local distribution companies operating within the Commonwealth enable the connection of distributed energy projects within 1 year of signing interconnection service agreements.
  - 2.1.11 Amending MGL Chapter 25A Section 11F to exempt energy systems owned, operated or used by agricultural businesses from any such environmental justice requirements.
3. Subsidies and Rebates
    - 3.1 We support:
      - 3.1.1 Incentives or subsidies for alternative energy sources and saving techniques. 2018-30 \*R (2006)
      - 3.1.2 Energy rebates from the state and federal energy taxes. 2018-30\*R (2006)
  4. Electrical Generation
    - 4.1 We support:
      - 4.1.1 Legislation to amend M.G.L. Chapter 164, Section 139 to allow for a landowner to install electric generation equipment on a single parcel for purposes of net metering equal to the amount of net metered electric generating capacity said landowner would otherwise be allowed to net meter on one parcel and on all his or her adjacent parcels combined. 2016-37
  5. Biomass
    - 5.1 We support:
      - 5.1.1 Collaboration with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and the Renewable Energy Trust to provide incentives for biomass use and fuel production (i.e. cord wood, wood pellets, corn and other biomass renewable energy options) and work to extend tax credits and incentives at the state and federal levels. 2017-28 \*R (2008)
      - 5.1.2 The inclusion of energy efficient cogeneration facilities using renewable biomass and anaerobic digesters using agricultural waste in the solar and wind property tax exemption codified in Chapter 59, Section 5 of the General Laws of Massachusetts. 2018-28\*R (2015)
  6. Miscellaneous
    - 6.1 We support:

- 6.1.1 Renewal of DOER funding of the Rural Electrification program, that DOER and Massachusetts Clean Energy Center convene a group of commercial bankers to explore means of increasing bank participation in the DOER program, that MFBF work with Mass CEC to develop a technical assistance program for farm renewable energy programs to aid their participation in the program. 2017-26 \*R (2014)
- 6.1.2 A regional strategy and implementation policy under the auspices of the New England Governors' Conference or a similar regional entity that will help to insure a competitive position for the goods and services of our region despite New England's vulnerability to energy supplies. 2018-29 \*R (2000)

## TAXES, ASSESSMENTS AND FEES

### 302 / Chapter Land

- 1. Chapter 61, 61a and 61b
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 Moving the application deadline for Chapter 61, 61a and 61b to February or March. 2017-89 \*R (2014)
    - 1.1.2 A change in statute to require cities and towns use 61a values set by the state. 2016-94 \*R (2013)
    - 1.1.3 Three per acre land value recommendations provided annually by the Farmland Evaluation Advisory Commission relative to 61A values. 2016- 95 \*R (1998)
    - 1.1.4 The consistent assessment of land values according to Chapter 61a guidelines. 2018-81 \*R (1997)
    - 1.1.5 The inclusion of maple production in the productive hardwood category of Chapter 61 without the requirement of a forest management plan. 2017-94 \*R (2011)
    - 1.1.6 A requirement that any church, synagogue, school, college, university, or non-profit organization that sells any real estate of which they have paid no property tax, that they be subject to the tenets of chapter 61, 61A and 61B regarding repayment of back property tax and that the city, town, or village have the right of first refusal to purchase the real estate for a period of 120 days. 2018-78 \*R (2003)
    - 1.1.7 Applying Chapter 61A valuations on properties of less than 5 acres providing for a lower land valuation for farmland and consequently a lower tax bill.

### 303 / Taxes

- 1. Farm Land
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 Reducing or eliminating the estate tax on farm land and farm buildings. 2017-90\*R (2014)
    - 1.1.2 Through intervention on behalf of individuals and through seminars, in protecting our members, and sustaining existing laws which protect farmland from unfair taxation. 2016-97 \*R (2004)
    - 1.1.3 The exclusion of farmers from paying property taxes on public land, or as an alternative, that the value of the land be based on use value 2017- 98 \*R (2002)

- 1.1.4 The exemption of farmland from property taxes. 2016-6
  - 1.1.5 The state increasing the estate tax exemption to \$5 million. 2019-8.
2. Agricultural Buildings and Vehicles
- 2.1 We support:
- 2.1.1 Establishment of a program to ensure agricultural buildings are taxed at rates that are commensurate with the financial capabilities of farming operations. 2017-91 \*R (2014)
    - 2.1.1.1 Furthermore, house lots on which agricultural activities occur shall be taxed at an agricultural value. 2018-72
  - 2.1.2 The exemption of agricultural building materials from sales tax. The house lot shall be taxed on the actual size of the inhabitable house if the inhabitant is producing an annual crop for a living. 2017-95 \*R (2008)
  - 2.1.3 The delay of property taxes for 10 years on new agricultural structures after which they would be assessed at a 10-year depreciated value. 2017-95 \*R (2008)
  - 2.1.4 Placing farm houses and buildings at a true agricultural value as a necessity for the operation of the farm. 2018-80\*R (2003)
  - 2.1.5 A mechanism for the fair valuation of buildings, similar to the Farmland Assessment Act. 2018-83 \*R (1997)
  - 2.1.6 The lowest tax classification rate for farm buildings and land small or farm businesses in any zone. 2018-82 \*R (1997)
  - 2.1.7 The taxation of silos and feed storage bins as farm machinery and equipment. 2018-81 \*R (1997)
  - 2.1.8 Reforming the fee schedule for trailers used as part of agricultural activities. 2017-88
3. Sales Tax
- 3.1 We support:
- 3.1.1 The exemption of sales tax on farm trucks which are eligible to be registered with farm plates. 2017-96 \*R (2008)
  - 3.1.2 A sales tax exemption for equipment directly related to any solar, wind powered, heat pump, anaerobic digestion, geothermal, or gasification system, which is being utilized as a primary or auxiliary power system for the purposes of heating or otherwise supplying electric power needs of any structures used for an agricultural purpose. 2016-91
  - 3.1.3 Extending the agricultural sales tax exemption for services performed for agriculture, should Massachusetts implement a sales tax on services. 2018-72\*R (2015)
  - 3.1.4 The General Court revising MGL Chapter 64, Section 6(s) to include tools and materials as tax exempt for purposes of collection of Massachusetts sale tax. 2018-73
4. Income Tax
- 4.1 We support:
- 4.1.1 A requirement for the withholding of income tax on real estate sales by non-residents. 2017-92 \*R (2011)
  - 4.1.2 Permanent, federal and state legislation that allows farmers an appropriate tax deduction for donating food for the benefit of the public. 2018-75\*R (2015)
5. Excise Tax

- 5.1 We support:
  - 5.1.1 A change in law to allow municipalities to exempt incorporated farms from excise tax on farm equipment as is allowed for non- incorporated farms. 2017-93 \*R (2011)
  - 5.1.2 Elimination of the machinery and animal excise tax at the state level, including an exemption from its being included under the personal property tax. 2018-76 \*R (2012)
- 6. Renewable Energy
  - 6.1 We support:
    - 6.1.1 A change to MGL Chapter 59 Section 5, Clause 45, which specifies an excise exemption of 20 year for renewable energy systems, from 20 years to the “useful life of the system.” 2018- 84\*R (2006)
- 7. Miscellaneous
  - 7.1 We support
    - 7.1.1 Making fees associated Firearm Identification Cards (FID) a one-time fee. 2018-79 \*R (2003)
    - 7.1.2 Extending the agricultural exemptions granted under MGL Chapter 64H to all of agriculture. 2016-96\*R (1998)
  - 7.2 We oppose
    - 7.2.1 The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or any Massachusetts city, town, or village collecting any visitor impact fee for any event organized and sponsored by any Massachusetts non- profit organization or agricultural enterprise. 2018-77 \*R (2003)

## PROPERTY RIGHTS

### 304 / Land Preservation and Trusts

- 1. Massachusetts Farm Bureau Land Preservation Inc.
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 The creation of a program and practice, where our organization solicits funds to purchase and hold Agricultural Preservation restrictions, in perpetuity. 2017-65 \*R (2014)
- 2. Land Trusts
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 creating a bridge between Farm Bureau land trusts and farms interested in keeping their land open and available for farming. 2018-59 \*R (1997)
- 3. Farmland Advisory Committee
  - 3.1 We support
    - 3.1.1 The creation of a farmland advisory committee by the Commonwealth that consists of farmers and biologists to advise the state on how to improve the viability of agriculture on state land. 2016-69 \*R (2013)
- 4. Miscellaneous
  - 4.1 We support:
    - 4.1.1 Legislation to allow agricultural use on lands purchased with intent of “Passive Recreation” and/or “Open Space.” 2017-66 \*R (2008)

- 4.1.2 Incentives, created through the legislature to stem, to keep historic barns in repair. This could include but not be limited to tax abatements or funding for preservation efforts. 2018-58 \*R (2009)
- 4.1.3 Increasing access to publicly owned land for farmers of all scale across the Commonwealth.

### 305 / Agricultural Preservation Restrictions

- 1. ALPC
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 The establishment of a library of APR transactions and meeting minutes of the Agricultural Land Preservation Committee. 2016- 10 \*R (1998)
- 2. APR appraisal
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 The acceptance of one common appraisal by the APR program instead of the landowner having to spend monies on two appraisals. 2017-3 \*R (2014)
    - 2.1.2 Elimination of the \$10,000 per acre cap on the purchase of APR land. 2016-14 \*R (2007)
- 3. APR program
  - 3.1 We support:
    - 3.1.1 Changing the definition of “Agriculture” used in the APR program to the Chapter 128; 1A definition. 2016-12 \*R (2001)
    - 3.1.2 An increase in the per acre cap paid under the APR program, with the cap tied to an index to capture subsequent increases in value while also working to increase levels of funding for the APR program to eventually eliminate the need for the cap. 2017-4 \*R (2011)
    - 3.1.3 The acceptance of policy that a farm residence and/or alterations or new construction of dwellings for farm family members or farm labor, and other buildings associated with present or future operation of the farm be unimpeded by an APR contract. 2018-8\*R (2000)
    - 3.1.4 An ongoing budget line item to fund APR purchases from farms, which does not fund pass-through contracts arranged through third party interests.
    - 3.1.5 Allowing renewable energy systems to be installed on APR farms. 2018- 8 \*R (2006)
    - 3.1.6 A state or federal loan guarantee program for farms with APR land. 2016-9 \*R (2013)
    - 3.1.7 Legislation that clearly redirects the APR program back to its farmland preservation roots, establishes more detailed administrative procedures in the statute, and enhances the opportunities for farm businesses, and that that such legislation include protections therein that clearly protects the landowners of existing APR farms from the state’s misinterpretations or distortions of the original legislative intent of the program. 2016- 11 \*R (2001)
    - 3.1.8 Changes to MGL Chapter 20 (Section 23B) to allow special permits for greater than five years. 2018-3
    - 3.1.9 In the case that a town has taken an APR farm for non-payment of taxes, we support MDAR requiring the town to sell the property to a farmer before the ag value is degraded by neglect of MDAR should exercise its right of first refusal. 2018-4

- 3.1.9.1 Furthermore, MDAR may not change the APR contract as a means of getting the town to sell the farm. 2018-4
- 3.1.10 Amending the Aug. 1, 2019, deadline for the ALPC deadline to review all regulations and policies governing the APR program, providing that the Board of Directors is satisfied that the extension is in the best interest of increased farmer understanding of the program and increased farmer input into the development of the regulations and policies and that such extension is not excessive. 2018 - 5
- 3.1.11 APR program envelope additional criteria to allow a fair value to be committed to the purchase of farm development right, expand tools in the program to include TDR (transferable development rights) with open market sales to developers seeking to be involved in cluster zoning or 40B projects or other higher density housing or commercial uses.
- 3.2 We oppose:
  - 3.2.1 Clause C in MGL Chapter 184 Section 31. 2016-4
  - 3.2.2 APR landowners' rights being restricted or diminished further – through regulation or restriction of any kind - without acquiring 2/3rds vote of the Legislature and without the landowner incurring any penalty, financial or otherwise. 2017-5 \*R (2005)
  - 3.2.3 Any and all actions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which force or coerce land owners to accept conditions that are contrary or additional to those agreed to at the time of the placing of the APR. 2016- 10 \*R (1998)
  - 3.2.4 Activities by the Department of Agricultural Resources which derogate the value of APR farmland. 2016-10 \*R (1998)
  - 3.2.5 Any effort by the Commonwealth or any of its agencies to promulgate regulations which hold APR farms to a different standard than non-APR farms, with the exception of regulations specific to APR designed to clarify the process by which APR farms are acquired and administered. 2018-6 \*R (2012)

### 306 / Private Property Rights

- 1. We define property rights as the fundamental right of all farmers the right of private property ownership of land and of water resources, to wit: The right to restrict access to private property; the right to protection of their herds, flocks, crops, pastures, timber, orchards and other agricultural products of the land from damage or destruction by vandals, trespassers, thieves, animal predators or pests; the right to unobstructed use of their land for reasonable or customary agricultural purposes; the rights of riparian ownership or use of groundwater for reasonable or customary agricultural needs; the right to sell or convey their property; and the right to protection from unlawful seizure or taking of their property. Further both Massachusetts and American Farm Bureau shall defend and promote these rights for all farmers. 2016-88 \*R (1998)
- 1.1 To this end, we support:
  - 1.1.1 Refiling of legislation of 1990, 30A Section 18. 2017-85 \*R (2008)
  - 1.1.2 Legislation amending MG. Chapter 140, Section 131 exempting landowners owning 50 acres or more in the Commonwealth from having to possess a hunting license to hunt on his or her own land. 2017-83
  - 1.1.3 A requirement that when a farmer is a target of a nuisance lawsuit the result of which is in the farmers favor, that the person filing the lawsuit shall pay all legal costs and treble damages for both federal and state suits. 2017-84 \*R (2008)

- 1.1.4 Awarding of multiple damages for farmers in situations involving eminent domain. 2018-69 \*R (1997)
- 1.1.5 Legislation defining the “taking” of property to include a reduction or decrease in property value of 25 percent or \$10,000. 2018-70\*R (1997)
- 1.1.6 Action necessary to show progress to counter the continual erosion of property rights by laws and regulations at town, county, state and federal government levels without consideration of these constitutional guarantees and particularly restitution of the financial loss to the owner by these takings. The amount of these damages to be arrived at as any other governmental annexation. 2018-71 \*R (1997)
- 1.1.7 Active farming shall not be restricted by said public agencies, or local authorities from following normal Ag practices including the use of such practices including improvements of land in agricultural, the use of water, soil amendments and pest control procedures.
- 1.2 We oppose:
  - 1.2.1 The creations of ‘water resource control’ boards, or similar entities that would have the authority to meter, generate revenue from, or restrict the amount of water that could be withdrawn from private wells on private land.

### 307 / Trespass, Vandalism and Destruction of Farm Property

- 1. We support:
  - 1.1 Prosecution of those animal rights groups and individuals who, by criminal trespass and vandalism, seek to destroy the image of livestock agriculture. 2016-98 \*R (1998)
  - 1.2 A change in current laws so that thefts from agricultural operations be treated exactly the same as thefts from stores and other businesses. 2018-86 \*R (2012)
  - 1.3 Enhancement of current trespassing laws or create new legislation, providing for civil and criminal penalties, exceeding twenty-five hundred dollars for anyone who has caused malice and damage to agricultural lands. 2017-44
  - 1.4 Legislation providing for triple damages paid to the owner of the livestock; crop and value- added products, natural resources, structures, vehicles or equipment for damaged caused by vandals/trespassers. 2017-44

### 308 / Zoning

- 1. Cannabis
  - 1.1 We support:
    - 1.1.1 Legislation to amend MGL 40A Section 3 to include cannabis production. 2017-99
    - 1.1.2 Initiating a mechanism to develop a cannabis policy. 2018-64
- 2. Housing Developments
  - 2.1 We support:
    - 2.1.1 All housing proposals under MGL Chapter 40B being required to have: a one hundred (100) foot buffer zone from any adjoining property line of property that is used for agriculture, open space, or that has a conservation, forestry, or agricultural restriction; the installation of a fence on the property line to safely keep any young children from coming into the agricultural area where they may become injured, and that such buffer zones be planted in evergreen type shrubs to help reduce noise, dust, and or any odors from reaching the housing development. 2017-100 \*R (2002)
- 3. Form A



3.1 We support:

- 3.1.1 Legislation that would: Do away with “form A” applications; Change the passage of zoning/planning by-laws from 2/3 to simple majority Do away with attorney general oversight on by-law and regulation passage. 2017- 34

4. Down-zoning

4.1 We oppose:

- 4.1.1 The concept of down-zoning and any and all changes to local regional or state laws that reduce the value of an agricultural landowners’ property or diminish his rights other than for significant and legitimate public health, safety or welfare reasons. 2018-87\*R (2006)

5. Miscellaneous

5.1 We support:

- 5.1.1 Regulations and rules pertaining to c184 and c132a and that affected parties be included in the process. These should include but not be limited to definitions of agriculture, development rights, agricultural value, and derogation of agricultural use. Regulations should include an appeals process for those farmers aggrieved by Department of Agricultural Resources’ actions and should include agricultural impact and small business impact statements. 2016-10 \*R (1998)

5.2 We oppose:

- 5.2.1 Public access doctrines as a condition in APR or Farm Viability Contracts, or Chapter 61, Chapter 61A or 61B. 2016-13 \*R (2004)
- 5.2.2 The Cape Cod Commission taking of land in exchange for approval of proposed house lots, subdivisions and similar proposals by landowners.

309 / Miscellaneous

1. We support legislation or policy to mandate that property owned by the State, a County or a municipality, with a Land Capability Classification of 1, 2 or 3, not be eligible and/or used for development and/or sale; or any other use but agricultural use. And that the highest and best use be classified and agricultural use only.

## SECTION 4 – LOCAL ISSUES

### Local Issues

#### 401 / Local Boards or Commissions

1. We support:
  - 1.1 legislation that would limit the authority of Boards of Health over piggeries absent any demonstrable and persistent impact on air or water quality, or reasonable cause to believe that such impacts will occur. 2017 – 67 \*R (2011)
  - 1.2 legislation that will require any local board of health regulation that affects or impacts agriculture, agricultural fairs or farmer’s markets be submitted for review and approval or disapproval to both the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) and Attorney General’s office for review of its economic viability on agriculture or other agri-business issues. 2016 – 70\*R (2010)
  - 1.3 efforts to limit or prevent local towns efforts to unduly regulate or prohibit the use of outdoor wood burning furnaces, remove local enforcement, and take into account future technical developments within the industry. 2016 – 73 \*R (2007)
  - 1.4 legislation, policies and efforts that would constrain municipal authorities from unreasonable regulating of agricultural and forestry operations. 2018-61 \* R (2009)
  - 1.5 right to farm and right to harvest policy in Massachusetts and will work to strengthen it. 2018-68\*R (1997)
  - 1.6 legislation or policy action that would require all local Boards of Heath to adhere to food safety standards set by the Department of Public Health, without expansion. 2018-62\*R (2009)
  - 1.7 Farm Bureau members cultivating a relationship with local boards of heath personnel, to know what’s going on relevant to the activities of the board and to ensure that a balanced approach may be undertaken and implemented in dealing with issues within the purview of the board of health. 2017-86 \*R (2002)
  - 1.8 the formation of local committees on a county level to assist in the resolution of agricultural problems and act as a local information resource on issues, to both the members of Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and to the local boards. 2018-11\* R (2003)
    - 1.8.1 We will encourage Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation members to join local town/municipal boards. 2018-11 \* R (2003)

#### 402 / Energy

1. We support state standards for wind turbine siting and installation that will help guide town and city governments to allow for quicker process of wind turbine applications. 2016 – 71 \* R (2007)
2. We support efforts to provide documentation that wind turbine installations are a farmer’s right when they are used as farm equipment. 2016 – 71 \* R (2007)

#### 403 / Wineries

1. We support legislation that would allow for Massachusetts “on farm” stores to sell Massachusetts wine products produced by a licensed farm winery without the requirement of a full liquor license or beer and wine license. 2018-60 \*R (2012)

404 / Definition of Farms and Farming

1. We support a uniform definition of farms and farming so that local and state statutes are compatible. 2018-67 \* R (1997)