



**Kansas
Farmers
Union**

2024 Policy Statement

LET US REASON



TOGETHER

**Grassroots policy adopted by delegates to the 116th
anniversary convention of Kansas Farmers Union
November 30 , 2023.**

Since 1907, Kansas Farmers Union has worked to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

We believe family ownership of farm land is the basis for the world's most viable system of food and fiber production. Maintaining this family farm system will preserve our natural and human resources as well as promote a strong rural economy and vibrant social structure.

Kansas Farmers Union represents our members, who are engaged in diverse farming and ranching pursuits, through education, legislation, and cooperation.

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Kansas Farmers Union's board of directors is made up of six members, along with the President and Vice President. The state is divided into a North and South District, and each district has three board members who serve three-year terms. One representative from each district is up for election each year and the President and Vice President are elected every other year. The positions of Treasurer, Secretary, and At-Large board member are appointed by the board of directors.

2024 Special Orders of Business

All special orders must be renewed annually if delegates wish to retain them. Otherwise, they automatically expire.

Support for Kansas County Health Departments

Kansas counties, both rural and urban, rely heavily on a strong and vibrant public health department. County Health departments have a rich history of servicing the physical and mental well-being of the wide spectrum of the populace of our cities, towns, villages, along with all rural residents from border to border. In most cases, these services have been in place for over a century, with a glowing record of performance. They do not discriminate, serving a multitude of individuals who often suffer from a lack of simple and everyday access to other health care services. From the newly born to the senior citizen, we all depend heavily on the access to the health commons of a community. Often, County Health Departments' everyday contributions go unnoticed and underappreciated – often victims of their own success.

Continued support and adequate funding of County Health departments is fundamental in maintaining a healthy, educated society. The economic health and future of every community is directly related to the physical and mental health of individuals and families within the community. We stand behind the medical professionals who staff our County Health departments and pledge our unwavering advocacy. These gifted souls, and our fellow citizens, are on the front lines of protecting and maintaining healthy and prosperous communities. They deserve our total and unwavering support.

Support for Medicaid Expansion

Kansas has a health coverage problem. Tens of thousands of Kansans fall into the coverage gap and don't have access to affordable health insurance. Forty states in the U.S., including all the states bordering Kansas, have expanded their Medicaid program, and it is long past time to act and make sure that Kansans don't get left behind. An overwhelming majority of Kansans agree - it's time to expand KanCare. Expanding KanCare will make health insurance accessible to 150,000 Kansans who otherwise may not have affordable coverage.

Expanding KanCare will also:

- Reduce health care costs for everyone. When low-wage Kansans can't get health coverage, that means more emergency room visits and crisis treatment for physical and mental health needs. When hospitals and health care providers aren't compensated for services, a portion of those additional costs are passed on to everyone through higher prices, meaning we are all paying more out of pocket and through insurance premiums.
- Protect Kansans from medical debt. Medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy in the United States. Getting access to affordable health insurance protects more Kansans from accruing high medical debt, and reducing their risk of bankruptcy.
- Support a healthier workforce. Most Kansans in the coverage gap work at least one job, but aren't offered employer-based health insurance or can't afford it. Those who are not working are often caretakers or are unable to work because of their own health conditions. When more people have access to the physical and behavioral health care they need, there are more workers healthy enough to re-enter or remain in the workforce.

- Keep Kansas economically competitive. Nearly all Kansas industries have employees who would benefit from expansion. Expanding KanCare helps our employers, small businesses, and workforce compete with our neighboring states, who have all already expanded their Medicaid programs.
- Preserve and strengthen rural communities. For Kansans in rural communities, accessing health care when and where they need it is becoming a significant challenge. When hospitals in rural communities close, not only do residents struggle to get care, but the community loses good-paying jobs. Expanding KanCare would help ensure rural Kansans get the care they need while also boosting their local economies.
- Ensure uniform access to affordable health care for all Kansans. Hispanic and Black Kansans are more likely to live in the coverage gap. Kansans who live in frontier counties and in the southwest part of the state are also more likely to live in the coverage gap. Expanding KanCare allows all low-wage Kansans access to affordable health care, regardless of their race, how much money they make, or what their zip code is.

Kansas Farmers Union has long called for Medicaid expansion in our grassroots, member-driven policy. We renew this call and strongly encourage policymakers to pass a long-term, sensible solution to the health coverage problem during the 2024 legislative session and expand Medicaid.

Medicare Advantage

We call for the discontinuation of the Medicare Advantage program which is the effort to deliberately defraud individuals and the public through the privatization of the Medicare program.

Priorities for the Next Farm Bill

The 2018 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2023, and our farm policy is due for important reforms. Farm bill reauthorizations serve as a periodic opportunity to debate and consider the policies that shape our farm economy, food system, and communities. Family farmers, ranchers, consumers, and our communities all benefit from a strong and resilient farm and food system. The farm bill helps to ensure our rural and agricultural economies thrive.

The farm economy is cyclical, and commodity price and input cost volatility are among the chief reasons that family farmers and ranchers are forced out of business. Farm bills should be written with tough times in mind so that programs serve as a safety net. Furthermore, farm bills work best when they are forward-looking; lawmakers should ensure the next farm bill anticipates future needs. These needs include strengthening farm bill conservation programs, which play a critical role in helping farmers implement practices that fight climate change, build soil health, and increase resilience. The farm bill is also a food bill. The nutrition title is key to reducing hunger and poverty and improving food and nutrition security.

Farm bill programs are primarily implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 2022, USDA had 5,300 fewer staff than in January 2017. Staffing shortfalls impede program implementation and must be rectified.

The following policies and provisions should be included in the next Farm Bill.

- Addressing the need to reduce greenhouse atmospheric emissions and protect funding that supports practices that mitigate and eliminate such emissions;
- Increasing the overall farm bill baseline and funding;
- Increasing the definition for beginning farmer and rancher from 10 to 15 years and match veterans returning to farming equally;
- Improving access to and addressing the inequities in programs geared toward beginning, veteran, socially disadvantaged, and underserved farmers;
- Maintaining a strong nutrition title that supports the food and nutrition security of our communities and that increases opportunities for local and regional procurement;
- Strengthening the research title, with a focus on research, outreach, and education to improve on-farm climate mitigation and adaptation;
- Expanding and funding the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN);
- Addressing ongoing staffing shortages at USDA, including staff attrition and inadequate pay for field staff;
- Requiring USDA to take department-wide steps to streamline program applications forms and processes to make its programs more accessible;
- Streamlining access to USDA programs and hiring sufficient staff to service technical and administrative requirements of each program to assure timely, competent, and beneficial participation for family farmers;
- Strengthening programs that support local and regional food systems;

Kansas Farmers Union looks forward to continued discussions and negotiations with key policy makers at the federal level, along with building important networks and coalitions around these priorities for the next Farm Bill.

United States Postal Service

The United States Postal Service (USPS) was established in the Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 7, "Congress shall have the power to establish post offices and post roads." Kansas Farmers Union has a long history in support of the USPS, including rural free delivery of mail.

We are deeply concerned with the systematic dismantling of the postal service structure, based on fiscal pressure unduly inflicted upon the U.S.P.S. by Congress. We believe the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, requiring the institution to pre-fund retiree pension funds decades in advance, is unwarranted and the primary culprit in the financial issues facing the U.S.P.S.

The potential elimination of Saturday and door-to-door delivery, coupled with the loss of good-paying postal jobs over the entire nation, will negatively affect the economy. Rural America will be dealt an additional first class blow under this misguided policy. Local and regional newspaper delivery to outlying areas will be delayed for days. This not only damages the circulation numbers of the newspapers, but also devalues local information and advertising. We support utilizing post offices as community service hubs.

We call for the immediate removal of current Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. The replacement should be an advocate for a Postal Service that meets the needs of the American people, and we stand firm in our conviction to protect this great freedom and commonwealth from attacks and privatization.

Preamble

Kansas Farmers Union empowers and engages family farmers, ranchers, and communities through organization, education, cooperation, and legislation.

Kansas Farmers Union takes pride in defining our policy. We believe policy should address the needs of people and the environment. The moral and ethical decisions made by individuals and governments have an impact on our daily lives, and on the lives of future generations.

Recognizing that fact, our policy strives to ensure those decisions maintain a just and ethical basis.

Our policy also addresses the use of our natural resources and environment with the same fervor. We must not allow greed, ignorance, or carelessness to bring about exploitation of our natural resources, or of our fellow man.

We believe family ownership and maintaining family farms will preserve natural and human resources and contribute to climate stability.

Agriculture Policy

A policy of parity prices, fair trade, and humanitarian aid should be established by our country and promoted around the world.

We support the following guidelines for a farm policy to enhance agriculture and communities, limiting the causes of climate change, limiting corporate power, strengthening democracy, and supporting human development:

- Recognition of the dignity of labor.
- Farmer-owned reserve (Market-Driven Inventory System)
- Safety net – affordable crop insurance, permanent disaster program
- Farm program payment limits
- Supply management
- Conservation programs and stewardship
- Renewable energy
- Measures to mitigate/reverse climate change
- Food, nutrition, and health programs
- Public funded research
- Community development

- Country of origin labeling
- Fair and competitive markets
- Enhance public and rail transportation infrastructure
- Accessible and affordable agricultural credit
- Full funding of farm and conservation programs
- Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) liability and oversight
- Beginning and socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher programs.
- Sustainable agricultural water use
- Empowering farmers through cooperative action

Farm Service Agency

Kansas Farmers Union opposes efforts to dismantle the Farm Service Agency (FSA) delivery system through office closures, elimination of county office positions, or change employees' classification to civil service.

We support adequate funding and staffing to support the FSA service centers.

We support the continuation of farmer-elected committees and strongly oppose any effort to reduce the number of such committees or any attempt to make the position of committee person appointed.

We oppose the formation of any national oversight committee which supersedes state or county committee jurisdictions.

Farm program benefits should be limited to family farmers.

International Trade Agreements

We urge congress and the administration to re-negotiate trade agreements to prioritize and support human development.

We oppose "Trade Promotion Authority" that circumvents the ability of Congress to negotiate trade agreements.

We oppose the fast-track authority for trade agreements/approval by Congress and that those should be fully aired and debated.

Trade agreements should reflect the need to limit corporate power, strengthen democracy, and promote human development.

Food for Peace

We support P.L. 480 food for peace and economic justice for all.

Insurance and Disaster Programs

We support a federal premium subsidy of at least fifty percent (50%) for all levels of coverage.

Yields should be based on APH (Actual Production History) over a 5-year period.

FSA yields should be updated to reflect the true county averages.

We urge a minimum level of multi-peril crop insurance (50%) be provided as a benefit of farm program participation to traditional family farm sized units.

We support subsidy limits on crop insurance premiums, coupled with conservation compliance.

We support limiting crop insurance premium subsidies for any single business entity or individual to \$75,000.

We support expanded disaster programs along with continued improvements in crop insurance to make it a more fully functional program.

We support continuation of disaster programs until such time as crop insurance is fully a functional alternative.

Whenever a natural disaster strikes, destroying any programmed crops, affected producers should receive a loan deficiency payment (LDP) based on the county average yield.

We oppose the USDA Risk Management Agency allowing premium discounts promoting the use of specific crop inputs and/or farm equipment.

We support full disclosure of crop insurance subsidy payments received by participants in the crop insurance program.

We support the automatic "opt-out" designation of premium deduction prior to the due date of successive crop premiums.

Crop insurance coverage regions should reflect feasibility of crop production in the region.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ground should be ineligible for receiving crop insurance until five years of crop production history has been established or be subject to approval by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) county committee.

We support the development and expansion of products that allow producers of non-program commodities, diversified farming operations of specialty and minor crops to have equitable insurance coverage based on the market for which it is produced.

We support the Livestock Gross Margin program.

We support overhaul or replacement of the Dairy Margin Coverage Program (DMC) with a program that protects family dairy farms from price volatility.

We call for a special nationwide commission to develop effective policy and yield data for specialty crop farms, which includes publicly subsidized crop insurance for specialty food crops, and crop insurance programs which support the use of cover crops and do not penalize such use.

Food Safety

Since the Kansas Farmers Union's goal is a safe food supply, for all consumers we support the following:

- Provide incentives for a more decentralized food system, processing and packing industries.
- Ban Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) presumptive positive animals from the human food supply.
- Ban imports of live animals and processed meat without documented labeling and verification.
- Remove all meat protein products and by-products from feed of all species, including poultry.
- Implement a voluntary, affordable, and workable national animal identification program implemented and administered by the federal government, and not by a private entity.
- Implement a fully funded Country-of-Origin-Labeling (COOL) program.
- Ingredient labeling of processed feedstuffs.
- Review the food processing system and add additional inspection.

- We support continued funding for farmer education programs concerning food safety.
- The EPA and KDHE investigate, report, and make recommendations on mitigating/regulating PFAS in our food and agricultural systems and its effects on the environment and human health.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

We support full public disclosure of all GMO ingredients through food labels, and the right to label non-GMO.

We support compensation, by the patent holder, of producers experiencing income losses due to drift and cross-contamination.

We support the protection of traditional crop, fish, animal, and insect genetics.

Imported Foods

We support the enforced United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection of all imported foods to meet the same requirements as inspected products in the United States.

We believe that for meat to be labeled a United States product, it must be bred, born, raised, processed, and packaged in the United States.

Dairy Imports

We oppose any reduction of import quotas on dairy products.

Livestock and Poultry Imports

All livestock entering the U.S. must be held in quarantine until such time there is proof positive the imported stock is disease free.

Horse Slaughter

We oppose a ban on the slaughter of unwanted horses and other meat species, and the criminalization of individuals processing, shipping, transporting, purchasing, selling, delivering, or receiving any meat, flesh, or carcass for the purpose of harvest.

We call for the reinstatement of facilities to deal with the humane disposal of horses.

Inter-state Marketing of Processed Meats

We support federal legislation to allow the smaller independent meat packers, who meet state meat inspection standards, to market inter-state.

We demand the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) fully implement and allow interstate shipment of state inspected meat.

Regenerative Sustainable Agriculture

Regenerative, sustainable, agriculture is based on the three-legged stool of being environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially just.

We urge all educational institutions to pursue research and education to support sustainable agricultural endeavors including, but not limited to, organic farming, local food, and sustainable regenerative agriculture practices, and to cooperate with other entities doing such research and education.

We support increasing public funding for research in this area.

Agricultural Research Funding Accountability

A significant portion of agricultural research conducted at public institutions is funded by the private sector.

We encourage more public funding of agricultural research, and the identification of all funding sources must be available to the public.

Corporate Vertical and Horizontal Integration and Price Fixing

We demand the strict enforcement of the anti-trust laws.

We fully support the Kansas Legislature establishing a comprehensive Producer's Protection Act.

We also call for state and federal legislation that would require binding mediation in the events of disputes between growers or their organizations and contracted processors or marketers.

We support legislation to abolish packer/feeder combinations that control more than two percent (2%) of the market share.

Federal Anti-Corporation Farming Law

The County Option, the last remaining protection of citizens' rights when it comes to corporate agriculture, must be preserved and protected.

Kansas counties should be able to opt out of consideration by any corporation looking to relocate to the state.

We also believe Kansas citizens should be able to petition registered voters and bring corporate farming issues to a public vote.

Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act

We support the "Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act" (AFIDC).

Kansas Corporate Farming Law

We believe the county option should be preserved in Kansas 'corporate farming laws. For over 80 years, corporate farming laws have protected family farms and ranches from the threats of unfair competition by corporate and foreign interests, and all-out repeal threatens the future of family agriculture across Kansas.

The county option, the last remaining protection of citizens 'rights when it comes to corporate agriculture, must be preserved and protected.

We find it very disconcerting that both elected and appointed officials, who have touted the virtues of local political control and smaller government, now feel the need to take away this last protection.

We believe Kansas counties should be able to opt out of consideration by any corporation looking to relocate to the state.

We also believe Kansas citizens should be able to petition registered voters and bring corporate farming issues to a public vote.

We believe Kansas is better off when those who own and work the state's farms and ranches are individuals and families who have the opportunity to control their own land and labor, and a desire to create a future for family farming and ranching, and for all of rural Kansas, that is socially just, economically equitable, and environmentally sound.

Family farms and ranches are the foundation that built this state, and they continue to drive and lead its economy.

We believe Kansas family farmers and ranchers should expect every protection the state can provide.

United States Postal Service

Kansas Farmers Union has a long history in support of the USPS, including rural free delivery of mail. We are deeply concerned with the systematic dismantling of the postal service structure, based on fiscal pressure unduly inflicted upon the USPS by Congress. Recent operational restructuring has curtailed service across the nation, particularly in rural areas. Rural residents depend heavily on the USPS for daily business transactions, communications, and as a vehicle for growth of the rural economy.

We believe the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act requiring the institution to pre-fund retiree pension funds decades in advance is unwarranted and the primary culprit in the financial issues facing the USPS.

We urge Congress to restore adequate funding to the United States Postal Service.

We also urge expansion of USPS services including, but not limited to, postal savings banks.

The potential elimination of Saturday and door-to-door delivery, coupled with the loss of good-paying postal jobs over the entire nation, will negatively affect the economy. Rural America will be dealt an additional first class blow under this misguided policy. Local and regional newspaper delivery to outlying areas will be delayed for days. This not only damages the circulation numbers of the newspapers, but also devalues local information and advertising.

The USPS was established in the Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 7, "Congress shall have the power to establish post offices and post roads."

We stand firm in our conviction to protect this great freedom and commonwealth from attacks and privatization.

To further promote local farm production and food security, the USPS should establish a special rate for agricultural food products shipped directly from farms to end consumers.

Commodity Futures Trading Commission

We believe the historic system of commodity futures trading continues bankrupting family farmers, ranchers and consumers and is not a prudent risk management tool.

We oppose the continued consolidation and monopolization of the commodity futures trading process.

The following should be enacted:

- Transfer regulatory authority of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the Security Exchange Commission (SEC).
- Support regulations that maintain prices above the cost of production.
- We oppose ag commodity options as a substitute for farm programs.
- We are opposed to any government involvement in agriculture options or futures trading as a substitute for or in conjunction with farm programs.
- We oppose any speculative trading of commodities futures by any foreign governments, companies or individuals.
- All commodities sold on futures or options shall be treated as a positive sale and taxed the same as any ordinary sale of the same commodity.
- We support legislation requiring all speculative futures contracts to be assessed any federal check-off.
- We support the elimination of speculative short selling of commodity futures contracts.

Federal Grain Inspection Service

We recommend that the percentage of allowable dockage be reduced.

We support legislation to prohibit adding foreign material to any commodity.

We request that the state of Kansas require that the grain trade give equal credit to grain that exceeds the standard weight in direct proportion to the discount for grain under standard weight.

We oppose privatization of the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS).

Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)

We support re-establishment and full funding of GIPSA, and the critical services provided to our nation's farmers, ranchers, and consumers.

We oppose any effort to privatize the inspection and weighing of grains exported from the United States.

Federal Taxation

We support the principle of a progressive income tax.

We support the phase-out of all tax preferences that made agriculture a tax shelter for outside, speculative investment.

We recommend a change in the federal income tax laws to eliminate income tax liabilities of forced liquidations.

Road tax on farm fuels should be exempt at point of sale.

We support the continuation of the deduction of state and local property taxes from federal tax returns.

We support income tax averaging for family farmers.

We support increasing the number of tax brackets to facilitate a more equitable tax structure.

We support the tax incentives to encourage the use of wind, solar and other renewable energy systems.

Individuals should be allowed the same health insurance deductions as corporations.

We support increasing the income limit on calculating social security tax.

We support continuation of an estate tax with an eight-million-dollar (\$8,000,000) exemption.

We support the establishment of a financial transaction tax.

We support investigation and elimination of both offshore and domestic tax shelters used to avoid federal income tax.

We support the establishment of a minimum 15% corporate income tax.

State Taxation

We support a balanced approach to the use of income, property, and sales tax for funding state and local government.

We support the immediate elimination of the sales tax on groceries.

We support funding property tax in conjunction with an income booster tax, to supplement education funding, and provide local property tax relief.

We oppose an increase of state sales tax.

We support a fair and progressive state income tax.

We oppose the elimination of the corporate income tax.

We support exempting road tax on farm fuel at the point of sale in lieu of refund.

We are in favor of the current homestead property tax exemption, and we support its increase to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000).

We support the continuation of a mineral production tax on oil, gas, salt, and coal to provide additional funding needed for school financing and road and highway construction and maintenance.

We oppose the 10-year property tax exemption on pipelines and industrial wind/solar.

We support a fair and reasonable tax on personal property.

We support a state-wide intangible earnings tax to be used for property tax relief and funding education.

We urge the reinstatement of the double exemption for individuals over the age of 65.

We support an estate tax with an eight-million-dollar (\$8,000,000) exemption.

Social Security

The Social Security fund should be held in its own entity and not be used to finance other government operations.

To be viable and assure benefits into the future, Social Security must be a mandatory, universal system.

We oppose proposals that would privatize any segment of the system.

We support the removal of the income limit subject to social security taxation.

Social Security benefits are increasingly inadequate to meet basic living needs of beneficiaries.

We support substantial increases in the basic level of Social Security benefits.

Campaign Finance Reform

We demand meaningful campaign finance reform, specifically public funding of congressional and presidential campaigns.

We oppose the use of “soft” money (super political action committees, also referred to as super PACs) in campaigns.

We support elimination of corporate campaign finance through “corporate citizenship.”

We support reversal of the “Citizens United” U.S. Supreme Court decision.

We support full, timely disclosure of all campaign finance sources.

Federal Commodity Checkoffs

We believe that mandatory checkoff programs promote surplus production and exploitation of human and natural resources.

We support the elimination of all mandatory checkoff programs.

We call for audits investigating the use of checkoff funds to promote political agendas.

Fraud and abuse of checkoff resources and/or money must be fully prosecuted.

All checkoff programs must be subject to a referendum vote by mail ballot every three years.

We believe checkoffs are conflicting by design, which offsets other checkoff efforts.

No checkoff funds should be used to the detriment of another agricultural commodity, farmer, rancher, or natural resource.

State Commodity Checkoffs

We support voluntary checkoffs at point of sale.

Bankruptcy

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) should not have authority to “classify” loans due to reduction of land values.

We oppose any federal effort to eliminate Chapter 12 bankruptcy and any other action to further lessen a borrower’s rights.

We support the right of mandatory mediation to prevent bankruptcy.

We support full permanent USDA funding of the state mediation programs.

Energy

We support conservation as the major effort to reduce energy requirements.

We support the research and development of renewable energy resources such as solar, geothermal, wind, green hydrogen, biodiesel, and algae with expansion of community-owned generated power.

Federal and state low-interest loans and tax credits should be made available for these and other programs to develop energy self-sufficiency.

We urge producers to adopt farming practices and crop mixes that will permit efficient utilization of locally produced fuels and nitrogen fertilizers, thereby reducing agricultural dependence on the petroleum industry.

We favor rationing of fuel if needed.

We are opposed to excessive taxes and/or price increases to control fuel use.

We favor the abolition of take-or-pay contracts.

We oppose the deregulation of natural gas prices.

We support a resilient expanded electrical grid system that allows for dependable transmission nationwide.

We support securing 100% of the nation’s energy utilization from renewable sources by 2050.

We are opposed to retail wheeling and deregulation of energy.

We support C-BED (Community-Based Energy Development).

We support net metering of electricity, with a 12-month averaging period.

We support storage of energy from renewable generation.

We support the renewable portfolio standard established by the Kansas Renewable Standards Act.

We support renewal of the National Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit.

We oppose discriminatory utility rates for customers who generate renewable energy.

Hydraulic Fracturing Operations

We support a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing operations in oil and gas recovery until an environmental impact study, guided by sound science, proves the activities safe.

Rural Electrification Administration (REA)

We oppose any effort to “privatize” the REA system.

We strongly oppose loss of rural electric territory to investor-owned power companies.

We urge rural electric cooperatives to enter renewable energy production.

Telecommunication

We urge the continuation and further development of reasonably priced, state of the art telecommunication service to rural customers.

We oppose consolidation of telecommunication providers.

We support net neutrality of the internet.

We encourage cooperative development and rural representation wherever broadband is being expanded in Kansas.

Health Care

We support health care as a basic human right.

We support implementation of a single-payer health insurance system.

We believe health care coverage must be comprehensive.

We believe there should be public education to promote healthier lifestyle choices.

Until such time as universal single-payer coverage is enacted, we support a one hundred percent (100%) tax deduction for health insurance premium paid by the self-employed, and we support equalization of Medicare payments to rural and urban hospitals alike.

All deductions from people's income for health insurance costs should be subtracted from their taxable income.

We support incentives for the purpose of encouraging doctors and other health care professionals to practice in rural and other under-served areas. Those who receive aid to practice in Kansas for a specified period should be required to fulfill their obligation.

We support prescription coverage under the Medicare and Medicaid systems.

We support requiring Medicare to negotiate all prescription drug prices.

We oppose the sale of Kansas Blue Cross-Blue Shield.

We support Medicaid expansion in Kansas, and we oppose any of the initiatives to privatize Medicare.

We oppose privatization of the state mental health system.

We support the legalization of medical marijuana.

We believe healthcare plans should be under the oversight of the Insurance Commissioner.

We support an increase in market choice and affordability of insurance providers for the Kansas Healthcare Marketplace.

We recognize the critical role county health departments play in their communities and strongly urge the robust funding and support of these entities.

We call for the discontinuation of the Medicare Advantage program which is the effort to deliberately defraud individuals and the public through the privatization of the Medicare program.

Transportation

We urge the revitalization of our nation's passenger and freight railroad system and additional accountability to address public need and railroad worker protections.

We oppose the closing of branch rail lines, which serve rural communities.

We oppose the deregulation of all non-competitive transportation enterprises.

We support the retention and expansion of existing Amtrak routes in Kansas and across the nation.

We oppose all coal slurry pipelines.

We oppose the cumbersome IRS regulation requiring farmers to log farm car, pickup, and truck mileage.

We oppose foreign ownership of domestic railroad lines.

We oppose the privatization of highways and bridges used in the agricultural transportation system.

We support increasing the transportation trust fund through higher gasoline taxes.

We believe the state of Kansas should adopt the federal transportation laws regarding portable fuel containers.

We oppose the diversion of state highway trust funds to offset budget deficits.

We support the exploration of using recycled materials to build roadways.

Farm Cooperatives

Cooperatives create and continually re-create communities. The unique character of cooperatives is that they put the social well-being of their members and communities on par with their economic well-being.

Agricultural cooperatives should be further strengthened in the American farming system to enable farmers to achieve greater bargaining power both in marketing and purchasing.

We oppose any attempt to interfere with the present capital structure of the cooperative and its present tax status.

We are opposed to any co-op manager or non-members serving on the board of directors of our local or regional co-ops.

We support current legislation that requires five (5) members to form a co-op.

We oppose the distribution of severance pay to board members, chief executive officers, and other executives due to mergers or acquisitions.

We oppose changing regulations that require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members to change the articles of incorporation.

We oppose planned entry into livestock breeding and feeding facilities which will place cooperatives into a vertical integration position.

Cooperatives must not use their resources in ways which create direct competition or weaken the membership's financial well-being.

We support the Rochdale Principles and re-emphasize our support of one member/one vote.

We oppose the use of a proportional voting system, or voting power based on member's use of the cooperative or on the amount of stock ownership.

We strongly oppose any cooperative entity from creating an alliance with any company that intends to control the market.

Community Development

We urge the Kansas Legislature and U.S. Congress to provide adequate funding for staff, resources, and program expenses to provide information, consultation, and referrals to rural and urban residents for implementing community development initiatives.

We support locally owned and operated value-added endeavors.

We also call for the rejuvenation of a rural development initiative for the benefit of the local community.

We support federal and state infrastructure funding based on a priority of need rather than the ability to provide matching funds.

We support maintaining rural post offices.

We urge the Kansas Legislature to conduct public hearings on income and wealth disparity to devise equitable tax policy.

Foreign Investment in Agricultural Land and Enterprises

We urge passage by the Kansas State Legislature of a law to prohibit entry into business of farming and ranching or the ownership of agricultural land and enterprises by non-resident alien investors.

We urge passage of legislation strengthening the reporting of Kansas agricultural land owned by aliens, corporations, and/or limited partnerships.

State Banking

We urge the Kansas legislature to establish a state bank of Kansas modeled after the State Bank of North Dakota.

We support the system of independent rural banks and credit unions.

We urge those banks to support Kansas family farmers and to serve the credit needs of Kansas family farmers.

We favor the same regulations for savings and loans institutions.

Federal Banking

We support reform in the banking industry to establish equity.

We support strengthening the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and the Glass-Steagall Act.

We support strengthening the Community Reinvestment Act.

Interstate Branch Banking

We oppose the Riegle-Neal Interstate Banking and Branching Act, which mandates that an out-of-state bank be allowed to purchase banks across state lines without regard to individual state law.

We support state legislation to opt-out of the interstate branching provision of the Riegle-Neal Interstate Banking and Branching Act.

Elevator Bankruptcy

State legislation should prohibit speculation in the futures market by grain elevator owners and operators, except in the case of legitimate hedging. It should also prohibit involvement by elevators in delayed or deferred pricing schemes.

Grain elevator operators should be required to submit more detailed financial information to the Kansas Grain Inspection Department.

We support timely and in-depth audits.

We support the acceleration of the receivership process for financially troubled elevators, with provision for a temporary receiver to be named ensuring immediate supervision of a bankrupt elevator to guarantee that grain is protected while the courts appoint a permanent receiver.

We support farmers being given priority through “farmers first lien” in elevator bankruptcy proceedings.

We oppose the grain warehouse trust fund concept funded by a check-off assessed against grain sold by farmers.

We endorse a federal or state insurance program protecting any stored and/or priced grain for all state and federally inspected elevators, similar to the federal deposit insurance corporation for banks.

Warehouse receipts and scale tickets shall be recognized as legal proof of ownership of grain and should be guaranteed by the government.

We support similar protection for the sale of livestock through public auction.

Voting and Democracy

We support the concept of initiative and referendum which allows our citizens to vote on major issues and to initiate ballot questions by petition.

We encourage all eligible citizens to register and vote.

We oppose restrictive voter identification requirements.

We support an apolitical legislative redistricting process, removed from legislative control.

We are alarmed at the growing attacks on U.S. democracy and the movement to autocratic rule.

We support protecting and strengthening voting rights, expanding ways to make voting easier, and making our elections democratically representative by ending partisan gerrymandering.

We oppose those who try to use the Kansas constitutional amendment process to misinform voters, end established social and political rights, and concentrate political and economic power in the hands of a privileged minority.

Kansas Department of Agriculture

We support the concept of a Secretary of Agriculture appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Pharmaceutical Genetically Modified Organism Production

We support strict regulation and public disclosure of any Kansas-grown pharmaceutical GMOs. All field research sites of such GMOs must be approved and have permits issued by the KDA.

Specialty Crops

Our communities need development of a more diverse agricultural system and access to healthy food.

We support further development and expansion of specialty crop production and marketing that will help address this critical need.

We support the development and expansion of industrial hemp production in Kansas.

Patent Laws

We oppose the patenting of life forms.

Kansas Seed Law

Kansas seed law should not restrict producers from replanting seed produced on their farms.

We oppose any efforts to introduce or allow the use of the “terminator gene” on our nation’s seed supply.

Brand Laws

We urge the establishment of mandatory livestock brand inspection at all markets.

Dairy

An adequate safety net must remain the goal for federal dairy policy. Congress and the administration must act to protect more dairy farmers from going out of business.

We support a budget resolution to increase spending for an adequate dairy safety net; programs that account for actual costs of production; exploring incentive-based inventory management programs; ad hoc disaster assistance; and trade policies that don’t disadvantage American dairy producers.

We support a floor on the basic formula price, i.e., the base price for determining the milk price for producers.

We support the use of the marketing order system in Kansas to effectively set a floor on dairy prices paid to the dairy farmers.

We support an appeal process for the American dairy farmers when an inspection is considered unjust by the farmer.

We support purposeful adaptation to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in the dairy industry.

We oppose the practice of tail-docking on dairy cattle.

We oppose further consolidation of large dairy companies.

State Meat and Poultry Inspection

We oppose the elimination of the state’s Meat and Poultry Inspection Division.

Noxious Weed Law

We oppose any legislation that would discontinue the current practice of county noxious weed departments selling, distributing, and applying pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals.

Industrial Water Use

We recommend industries, which are heavy users of water, be required to use surface water instead of ground water, and to recycle, when possible.

We urge that all oil and natural gas producers be prohibited from using fresh water in flooding for secondary oil recovery (hydraulic fracturing).

We oppose the use of any Kansas water for the transportation of coal slurry.

We call for KDHE reform on open mining regulations to ensure miners are good stewards of our water resources.

Water Resources, Uses, & Allocation

We strongly urge that all water allocation practices, including irrigation, and future development, conform to strict conservation principles to assure the wisest use of water to minimize the possibilities for adverse environmental and economic impact on affected communities.

We recommend any multi-year variable groundwater rights program include a mandatory reduction in total allocation as a conservation measure to offset potential unintended consequences.

We support access to adequate water resources for all Kansans and believe this access should not be impeded by industrial and agricultural practices.

We believe industrial practices, including irrigation, should never impede adequate access to water for diversified farms including urban and rural small-scale growers and surrounding communities.

We recommend that all wells have meters.

Water Transfer

We oppose the transfer of surface or ground water from one watershed to another, including the transfer of water from the Missouri River.

Water, Wind, and Solar Rights

Water, wind, and solar rights must not be severed from surface ownership.

Water Retention Structures

We support flood control using area watershed projects as opposed to large general dams.

We support continuing tax benefits to remain in effect on lands with donated easements for the entire state.

We support state funding and technical assistance for soil and water conservation practices.

Construction Work in Progress (CWIP)

We are opposed to costs for power generating facilities under construction being added to current utility rates.

Property Rights

A. Eminent Domain

We oppose the taking of private property without due process.

We oppose granting eminent domain power for private profit, including foreign entities.

We support maintaining the right of titling of agricultural land in families.

B. Zoning

We support the preservation of diverse farmland and diverse communities through intentional local zoning and planning practices.

We support the right to protest petition zoning Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) for open mining (KSA49-601).

We support zoning designations that allow urban agriculture as-of-right, including the production, processing, distribution, sale, and reuse of locally grown food.

C. Regional Planning

We support the required appointment of farmers on zoning or planning boards , assuring them representation on a par with non-agricultural interests in the region.

D. Wildlife

We support legislation that allows farmers a voice in the establishment of non-native or predator species in their area.

We require the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks to notify the public of any previous or future releases.

We support landowner's rights to convey conservation easements in perpetuity.

E. Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA)

We support the implementation of the UPHPA to help preserve the ownership of family farmland across generation and protect against its predatory partition by fractional outside interests.

Pollinators

The need to act on preserving pollinators is urgent.

We support improving pollinator health and habitat.

We urge strong private and public efforts to take action to protect pollinators through habitat protection and expansion.

We also support reducing the systematic use of neonicotinoids.

Climate Change

We acknowledge the urgency to make dramatic changes in agriculture and other sectors to address the ongoing climate crisis. This requires we consider human health and social impacts linked to climate change.

We urge strong public and private efforts to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases and toxic pollutants from all sources.

We support research on, and implementation of, climate change adaptations.

We support carbon credits.

We strongly support programs promoting regenerative agriculture as a means for farmers to receive compensation for agricultural practices maximizing sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide in agricultural soils.

We demand a true accounting of carbon sequestration based on hard science. This places farmers at the forefront of not merely coping with a continually deteriorating global climate, but instead, restoring earth's natural climate systems.

We strongly support implementation of the goals of the Paris Climate Change Accords.

Efficient Access to & Just Treatment of Immigrant Labor

Immigrant labor is an important factor in agricultural operations.

We recognize the need for specialized labor in agricultural production and processing, and support efforts to improve the process for such employment while insuring dignified and just treatment of employees.

We support open channels for legal immigration and access to work visas.

Pandemics & the Need for Robust Public Health Policy

Pandemics threaten to overtake health care resources including personnel, ICU beds, equipment, supplies, etc. Rural areas – already with limited health resources, are deeply impacted. Bringing disease under control should be a top priority for protecting public health and maintaining a functional economy and the life of our communities – rural and urban. We believe we must end the politicization of pandemic disease, and support and practice public health measures grounded in science. Government at all levels has a critical role to protect people and the institutions essential for maintaining key community and economic functions.

We support government cooperating at all levels to ensure:

- All people in the United States have adequate access to nutritious food;
- All people involved in food production are recognized as essential workers;
- Access to effective, affordable health care for all; availability of medical safety equipment to our health care providers; and rapid testing and free vaccines for the public.
- Food security via support for small to mid-size meat processors; expansion of local and regional food production; marketing and distribution supply chains; and strengthening worker safety protections and oversight in large-scale food and meat processing facilities.
- Schools and public education have funds to cover extra costs of disease prevention management and practices; broadband expansion coverage to all areas of Kansas to better manage remote learning formats; and bolster school feeding programs which are

a critical part of food security for many families during the regular year and summer months.

- Continued short term economic support for those who have lost jobs or suffered business losses due to a pandemic, and long-term planning and policy support to better address future pandemics by building resilience.
- Implementing practices to protect healthcare and other workers essential to carrying out the necessary activities to protect the public.

Debt Relief for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

We support fair compensation and debt relief under Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for all minority farmers and ranchers, both urban and rural, who have historically been denied fair access to USDA programs and benefits.

Fairness for Farmers & Rebuilding Regional Economies & Communities

Farm programs play a major role in what America's farms look like. Over the last few decades our farms have become more consolidated and focused on foreign markets, allowing monopolies and other entities to use farm products as bargaining chips. Monopolies have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of our supply chain and economy. We urge the current administration to focus on farm policy that promotes local and regional markets for the wellbeing of all producers and consumers.

Right to Repair

We support fair repair and right to repair legislation that would allow farmers and independent mechanics access to diagnostic software, information, and other tools to repair modern equipment.

Conclusion

We, the members of the Kansas Farmers Union, have formed this program through free, democratic procedures. We direct our officers and employees to promote this policy and our delegates to the National Farmers Union convention be bound to this policy. We pledge ourselves to support and promote this program.



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