



2011

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 2011 POLICY POSITIONS



Chris Wilson, President
American Agri-Women
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AAW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT, Chris Wilson

2103 Zeandale Rd, Manhattan, KS 66502
Phone: 785-539-7899, Fax: 785-537-9727
E-mail: president@americanagriwomen.org
AAW Phone: 785-537-6171
Cell Phone: 785-844-0274

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

RESOLUTIONS & VITAL ISSUES, Karen Yost

2343 Shiloh Rd, Billings, MT 59106
Phone: 406-652-9678, Fax: 406-245-3567
E-mail: resolutions@americanagriwomen.org

VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS, Linda Swiercinsky

1739 State Route 8, Maquon, IL 61458
Phone: 708-479-5270, Cell: 708-334-4030
E-mail: communications@americanagriwomen.org

VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION, Lisa Condon

5763 Prospect Rd., Horicon, WI 53032
Phone: 920-485-4329, Fax: 209-632-7037
E-mail: education@americanagriwomen.org

SECRETARY, Jody Elrod

PO Box 295, Robstown, TX 78380
Phone: 830-261-1316, Fax: 361-387-1137
E-mail: secretary@americanagriwomen.org

TREASURER, Carolyn Kleiber

P.O. Box 111 Phone: 620-947-3094
Hillsboro, KS 67063 Fax: 620-947-2476
E-mail: treasurer@americanagriwomen.org

PAST PRESIDENT, Marcie Williams

11404 Appleton Rd Phone: 740-893-4300
Croton, OH 43013 Fax: 740-893-4003
E-mail: pastpresident@americanagriwomen.org

AAW WEBSITE: WWW.AMERICANAGRIWOMEN.ORG

AGRICULTURE BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

TAXATION

Capital Gains Tax on the Sale of Farmland

1. AAW supports broadening of the \$250,000/\$500,000 exemption available on the sale of a personal residence to apply to the sale of farmland. Farmers and ranchers can easily exceed the threshold in a year when their income spikes and when they liquidate their operations.

Health Insurance for Self-Employed Individuals

2. AAW applauds the acceleration of the deduction for health insurance for the self-employed at 100%. However, AAW supports moving the deduction from page one of Form 1040 where it is deductible for federal income tax only, to schedules F or C, where it is deductible for self-employment tax as well.

Estate & Gift Tax

3. AAW is concerned that the popular move to eliminate the estate tax carries with it a return to carry-over basis.*

***This would mean that farm heirs (as well as other heirs) would not get a stepped up basis for property they inherit, making property acquired via inheritance and later sold subject to very large capital gains taxes. While we do not object to the elimination of estate tax, we call for transparency in the ultimate product and a fair analysis of all related provisions. In lieu of total elimination, AAW supports an individual exemption of \$5 million to \$10 million, indexed for inflation.**

Long-Term Security and Retirement

4. AAW supports legislation to encourage individuals to provide themselves with a guaranteed stream of income for life. Specifically, AAW supports a proposal that would create a tax incentive for lifetime payouts from individual annuities. It would allow individuals to exclude from taxation 50% of income received from an individual lifetime annuity, up to \$20,000 annually.

Depreciation Recapture on Retirement

5. AAW supports a change in the depreciation recapture rules when farm and other business depreciable assets are sold on retirement or cessation of business. Currently the amount of depreciation taken on most assets is recaptured as ordinary income, thereby eliminating the benefit of a more favorable capital gains tax rate for most businesspersons who sell their business assets on retirement.

Special Exemptions for Depreciation

6. AAW supports special exemptions for purchases of machinery and equipment, land improvements, livestock, and buildings.

INSURANCE

Health Insurance, Prescription Drugs & Medicare

7. AAW supports legislation that allows associations to offer group health insurance plans to individual members and small businesses.
8. AAW supports legislation reflecting the concept that citizens of the United States should have access to the best medical service available. We believe this is best delivered by private enterprise.

9. AAW respects and supports continued medical research.
10. AAW supports health insurance and Medicare coverage with the right of Americans to legally purchase medications from the most economical source.
11. AAW supports Medicare payments to rural health professionals and facilities at the same level as their urban counterparts.
12. AAW supports a proposed change in Medicare to include paying for nutrition counseling for those over age 65 and the disabled population who suffer from chronic conditions (i.e. high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes).
13. AAW supports a health care system:
 - that increases competition in the form of voluntary purchasing alliances to help smaller employers and individuals buy insurance at a reasonable rate rather than in the form of government-mandated bureaucracies;
 - where employers with temporary or part-time employees will be exempt from legislation that would require them to pay for health care coverage.
 - where medical professionals should make the decisions for specific testing and hospital stays.
 - that continues to develop and utilize paraprofessional programs in rural communities as well as programs to encourage doctors and nurses to locate in rural areas.

Long-Term Care Security

14. AAW supports continuation of government assistance in caring for the elderly who are truly without resources.
15. AAW, at the same time, supports legislation to encourage individuals to provide themselves with a guaranteed stream of income for life.
16. AAW supports an optional national regulator or Optional Federal Charter (OFC) for insurers that would create a uniform, consistent system that would remove barriers to consumer choice and offer consumers the same protections nationwide.

For more than 100 years, insurance has been regulated by the states, with each state having its own unique regulatory system. It is a cumbersome patchwork of laws and regulations characterized by delays and expenses that ultimately disadvantage consumers. Further, consumer safeguards vary and products available in one state may not be available in another.

Crop Insurance

17. AAW supports crop insurance as a viable alternative within the Farm Program as a necessary SAFETY NET at an affordable cost to producers.
18. AAW supports the reinvestment of any savings from additional cuts to traditional budget baselines for existing farm safety nets of direct and counter cyclical payments be made in crop insurance to better meet the risk management needs of all U.S. producers. AAW recognizes that current proposed cuts to the budget baseline for farm safety net options are ill-timed.
19. AAW supports reforms to the crop insurance program to:
 - provide in all regions of the country affordably priced, adequate coverage that is actuarially sound and voluntary;
 - require participation in crop insurance for eligibility in government crop disaster programs.
20. AAW supports requiring crop insurance for only crop disaster programs and not for other federal agriculture programs. Participants should have the option to not participate in the crop insurance program and thus not be eligible to collect insurance or government disaster payments.
21. AAW supports the strict enforcement of crop insurance regulations with regard to abuse of the program. Producers should be held to the highest standards. Those who commit crop insurance fraud should be held accountable and fined at the maximum level.

LEGAL CONCERNS

22. AAW supports legislation which would create criminal and civil penalties for anyone secretly filming or participating in undercover investigations at agricultural facilities without the express permission of the owner of the property.
23. AAW supports the legislative process and due process for determining major agricultural policy.
24. AAW strongly opposes any federal agency mandating regulatory authority without going through the legislative process and due process.

25. AAW supports due consideration to agriculture viability and no net loss to rural lifestyle, local customs, cultures, and human capital that supplies sustainable agriculture.
26. AAW opposes any effort to amend and/or abolish the existing rules of the Electoral College. We oppose any compact or entity circumventing the Electoral College as it currently exists.
27. AAW supports the Open Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) of 2010.

The EAJA was established by Congress to ensure that individuals, small businesses or public interest groups with limited financial capacity could seek judicial redress from unreasonable government actions. The EAJA is intended to force transparency and accountability on the large bureaucracies of the federal government

Sustainable Agriculture: AAW defines sustainable agriculture, including forestry, as using farm practices and resources that produce safe, high quality food and other products for America and the world; resulting in profitable operations that improve the land and environment for future generations.

Human Capital: AAW defines human capital as education, knowledge, ability, experience, and personal competencies of individuals affecting economic value.

AGRICULTURAL LABOR

AAW believes labor-intensive agriculture in the U.S., especially fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, greenhouse and nursery, dairy, grains, Christmas trees and timber face a dire labor crisis. Congress and several states have passed, or will pass, legislation mandating use of the federal E-Verify system for all employers. The US Government estimates that 50-70% of the current agricultural workforce lacks legal status. The costly and only legal temporary guest worker program (H-2A) provides less than 2% of the workforce, and is so badly broken as to be virtually unusable. If Congress passes mandatory E-Verify without including a workable program to provide the necessary seasonal/temporary labor needs unique to agriculture, and a sufficient transition period to allow current workers to be able to transition, domestic production of food and other labor intensive crops will increasingly move out of the U.S. Food is a strategic resource for the U.S., and the stability of our domestically produced food supply and other agricultural industries is at risk now. The current H-2A program is unable to supply the volume of workers needed to support American food production.

28. AAW supports legislative reform of the H-2A program as has been proposed in the AgJOBS legislation (Agricultural Jobs, Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act, H.R.2414/S.1038 [2010]).
29. AAW supports a guest worker program with a realistic admissions level that will be a legal channel for workers to enter the country.
30. AAW supports a workable employment verification system where workers can be verified. The E-Verify program is not workable in its current form.
31. AAW supports a legal channel for the experienced workforce that is feeding America and sustaining our industries.
32. AAW supports strong border security.
33. AAW supports a secret ballot as the way for workers to vote for union representation.

BIOFUELS

34. AAW supports biofuels tax credits to offer consumers alternative transportation fuels and offer farmers additional markets for corn, soybeans, timber, timber byproducts and other plant and animal sources.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES

International Trade Negotiation and Policy

35. AAW supports the strict implementation of all international trading rules to prevent unfair practices by competing nations and to assure unrestricted access to domestic and world markets. Furthermore, we believe that all trade agreements should be continually evaluated.
36. AAW believes that quality standards for imported products should meet the same standards required for U.S. products. Imported foods should meet the same grading and safety standards as domestic products.
37. AAW supports equivalent sanitary and phytosanitary regulations as part of any free trade agreement.

38. AAW opposes the use of false trade barriers and punitive tariffs in trade negotiations and policy development.
39. AAW supports payment of the technology fee on biotech seed by all who use the seed—not just those in the United States. The requirement that this additional fee be paid on all biotech seed planted in the U.S. is a distinct trade disadvantage to U.S. farmers by increasing their cost of production.
40. AAW supports cooperative efforts for international market development and promotion programs.

Border & Port Inspections

41. AAW supports USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service having the responsibility for border and port inspections with the appropriate increase in funding. We believe that inspection of our food supply at the ports of entry should be increased.

Sanction Reform

42. AAW believes that unilateral sanctions have not proven to be an effective means to further foreign policy goals and are disruptive to international food trade.

International Organizations and Trade Agreements

43. AAW recognizes the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the primary international forum for world trade.
44. AAW encourages the U.S. Trade Representative and/or the WTO to review the developing nation status definition.
45. AAW supports further liberalization of trade in agricultural products, which can be achieved through the WTO.
46. AAW supports balanced, fair international trade agreements that open international markets to U.S. agricultural products.

DOMESTIC TRADE ISSUES

Transportation

47. AAW believes that all commercial vehicles operating within U.S. borders must meet uniform safety standards.
48. AAW supports Congress' passage of a national increase of truck weight limits.

Two federally approved pilot programs in Maine and Wisconsin were successful in reducing fuel costs and labor costs for agriculture and natural resource industries.

Labeling

49. AAW supports Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on all imported agriculture and aquaculture products at the final point of sale to consumers.
50. AAW recognizes food safety and traceability mechanisms; however, the added cost of implementation must not be borne solely by the producers.

Market Consolidation

51. AAW supports strong congressional oversight of market consolidation. AAW believes that market consolidation restricts trade and decreases market access for small farmers.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AAW recognizes the potential of agri-tourism, value added and alternative crops whether for profit or education.

Telecommunications

52. AAW supports a full range of ownership of telecommunications infrastructure including entrepreneurs, large corporations, municipalities, and other units of local government.
53. AAW supports federal resources to build out fiber-based telecommunications for support of telehealth, electronic medical records and advancements in remote healthcare. Education and training are especially important in information technology and science-related fields.

54. AAW supports the Broadband for Americans Coalition, and urges that broadband be made both available and non-discriminatory/affordable (that is, comparably priced to broadband in urban and suburban markets) for all rural Americans.

Innovation

55. AAW supports policies and funding for the development of an innovative culture in rural America through transmission of land grant universities' research discoveries into commercial ventures.
56. AAW supports efforts by nonprofits and educational institutions to develop entrepreneurship in youth and adult populations.

Cooperatives

57. AAW supports the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in cooperatively-structured enterprises, recognizing the importance of protecting and strengthening the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in a cooperative effort. This effort includes cooperatively marketing their products, and acts as a bargaining agent which ensures access to competitive markets worldwide.
58. AAW supports initiatives that will ensure that the Farm Credit System remains a reliable and competitive source of credit for farmers, ranchers, agri-businesses, and agricultural cooperatives.
59. AAW supports the Agriculture Committees' continued jurisdiction over the Farm Credit Systems and regulatory oversight by the Farm Credit Administration.

Access to Capital

60. AAW supports lending policies that recognize the unique lending environment of rural areas.

Rural Hospitals

61. AAW supports continued appropriation of federal funds to keep rural hospitals operational and modern.
62. AAW supports continued Medicare funding for rural health services if Medicare funding or provisions for medicare funding declines.

GLOBAL ISSUES

63. AAW recognizes the need for an international forum for countries to discuss their differences and cooperate on problems of common concern.
64. AAW opposes the U.S. government granting any authority to the United Nations regarding the use or management of any federal, state, or private properties of the United States.
65. AAW opposes the U.S. government granting any taxing authority to the United Nations.
66. AAW supports the concept that the U.S., not the U.N., establish the criteria to be met by developing nations prior to receiving U.S. food aid.

We support giving "food" in food aid rather than dollars. We recognize that the U.S. needs to provide a steady level of food aid, every year, on which the international humanitarian community can rely.

67. AAW opposes the reauthorization of any designated biosphere reserves within the U.S. or its holdings and any new designation of reserves in the future.
68. AAW opposes the use of U.S. land holdings for barter of U.S. debts to foreign nations.

U.S. lands are owned by people of the United States of America and were never intended to use for barter. Every effort should be made to re-instate those holdings that have been transferred.

69. AAW recognizes the need for international self-reliant farm programs for developing and/or war-torn countries.
70. AAW opposes any legislation, such as Cap and Trade and clean energy bills, that put U.S. agriculture at a competitive disadvantage with other countries.
71. AAW asserts that any new U.S. climate change policy must deliver environmental progress without harming the economy or U.S. food production.

Commodities

A domestic food, fuel, and fiber supply must be the basis of our national security.

AAW recognizes that U.S. farmers and ranchers continue to provide a safe and abundant food supply in a healthy environment.

The future well being of the world depends upon modern, progressive production capabilities and practices of U.S. agriculture.

72. AAW supports the use and protection of existing and new seed technology for food, feed and fiber to advance a higher economic benefit and to assure an abundant and secure domestic and global food supply.
73. AAW demands the retention and continued development of the US Department of Agriculture. AAW believes the USDA is imperative for the continued global success of our national food, fuel and fiber product security.
74. AAW supports legislation that will enhance domestic and international market growth and also supports legislation that exempts food from trade embargoes.
75. In the event of a natural disaster, AAW supports timely government assistance to affected agricultural producers.
76. AAW supports an efficient and modern transportation infrastructure, which enables U.S. farmers and ranchers access to domestic and world markets. The general lack of transportation infrastructure maintenance, including locks and dams, and railroad monopolies, put all U.S. agriculture and the world food supply in jeopardy.
77. AAW supports funding for agricultural research and development through Land Grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure the necessary increases in productivity and safety of food, fuel, and fiber.

DAIRY AND LIVESTOCK

78. AAW supports programs financed by producer and processor investment that increase demand for US Dairy and livestock products both in the United States and around the world.
79. AAW supports creating a new, and or revised Dairy Producer Margin Protection Program to protect against both severe and unsustainable loss of margin.
80. AAW supports the use of the latest technological tools to meet increased global demand for meat, milk and eggs.
81. AAW supports availability of new products to safeguard the health of animals.
82. AAW supports the responsible use of antibiotics and other industry approved treatments to safeguard animal health.
83. AAW supports an enhanced infectious disease monitoring and testing program of imported and domestic animals and meat in order to maintain consumer confidence and market stability.
84. AAW opposes announcements of suspect cases of infectious zoonotic diseases.
85. AAW supports **timely** announcements of confirmed cases of infectious and zoonotic diseases.
86. AAW supports interstate shipment of meat from state-inspected processing plants where state regulations are equal to or exceed federal regulations.
87. AAW urges the USDA to work with state and federal animal health officials to identify all animals imported into the United States.
88. AAW recommends that any federally mandated surveillance and food safety programs be accompanied with adequate federal funding.
89. AAW supports research and education into standards of care that ensure animal well being and profitable ways to raise livestock set by marketing demands. This should require the use of peer-reviewed research-based science.
90. AAW supports mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) to promote consumption of U.S. products.
91. AAW urges Congress to promote policy and regulations that encourage flexibility by the livestock industry to make responsible management decisions on breeding, disease surveillance, marketing, environmental conditions, and other issues that affect the livestock industry and the welfare of animals.
92. AAW supports an effective track and trace system that is cost effective to producers and enhances public confidence in the U.S. food supply.
93. AAW supports legislation to clarify that Congress did not intend to regulate manure under the Comprehensive Environmental Recovery Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) or the Environmental Protection and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), known as Superfund laws.

GRAINS

94. AAW supports and promotes alternative uses of all grain and related byproducts produced in the United States. We support a

national energy policy that includes a renewable fuels standard (RFS) for all transportation fuels and less dependence upon foreign oil.

95. AAW encourages a coalition of feed, grain, and livestock organizations to assure a unified voice for agriculture.
96. AAW supports a farm bill that better enables producers to manage risk, and that is effective and efficient.
97. AAW supports enforcement of limitations on foreign material in grains exported to foreign countries, including all levels of handling from the farms to the country of destination.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

98. AAW supports the U.S. Department of Agriculture for increasing fruits and vegetable consumption in federal food programs.
99. AAW supports the continued education for the consumption of U.S. grown produce, which provides tremendous health and economic benefits to both consumers and growers.

SPECIALTY CROPS

100. AAW recognizes and supports a diverse specialty crop industry, which includes edible and non-edible crops.
101. AAW supports the U.S. Trade Representative establishing a position for specialty crop trade matters in the agricultural office.

LANDSCAPING, NURSERIES, GREENHOUSES

102. AAW supports the development of industry-driven, science-based, voluntary, Best-Management Practices (BMPs), including but not limited to, cost-share programs and other incentives that assist nurseries in meeting water quality standards and other environmental goals.
103. AAW supports continued research and development of biological, physical, cultural and chemical tools necessary for nursery growers and landscape maintenance professionals to incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPMs) strategies into their overall management regimens.
104. AAW insists that the scientific foundation and biological integrity of Quarantine-37 must never be compromised. It is a scientifically sound, biologically based barrier designed to minimize the introduction of new, damaging, exotic pests and diseases into the U.S.

POLLINATORS

105. AAW supports rebuilding viable and vibrant pollinator communities, through continued research across all lands to improve resiliency and functional redundancy in pollinator populations, and to improve long-term profitability of agriculture. Pollinators are vital to production agriculture.

Most fruit, vegetable, forage and seed crops, plus crops that provide fiber, drugs and fuel require the pollination services provided by managed and native or "wild" pollinators.

106. AAW supports promoting pollinators through further revisions to USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) field office technical guides and conservation practices.

NEW CROPS/NEW USES

107. AAW supports research efforts into the utilization of alternate/new crops for commercial food, fiber, and energy uses.
108. AAW supports funding of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to support research on plant-based feeds necessary to develop the regulatory structure for an offshore aquaculture industry in the U.S.

Natural Resources

AAW defines "sustainable agriculture," including silviculture, as using farm practices and resources that produce safe, high quality food and other products for America and the world, resulting in profitable operations that improve the land and environment for future generations.

109. AAW supports the multiple use of natural resources.
110. AAW recommends policies that promote the abundant renewable natural resources in a healthy, productive environment.
111. AAW supports the use of natural resources to produce food, clothing, shelter, and fuel as a priority for America's economy and national security.
112. AAW believes that government agencies that are using decision-making powers to affect natural resource communities and

industries need to be held accountable for their decisions. There should be:

- specific timetables,
- timely efficiency reports,
- analysis of public and private costs of implementation,
- balancing of harms and benefits,
- analysis of the effect of no-management actions.

113. AAW supports a national community stability act, taking into consideration local customs and culture, jobs, and economic impacts.

PUBLIC LAND & ANIMAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

114. AAW expects government to comply with the same standards imposed on citizens and businesses regarding the management of natural resources and wildlife.

115. AAW supports active, responsible management of wildlife.

Wildlife overpopulation, overgrazing, polluted streams, passing of disease from infected animals and extensive crop damages are but a few intolerable consequences of wildlife mismanagement.

LAND USE

116. AAW supports the preservation of our nation's sovereignty and our Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

117. AAW believes that good stewardship of our natural resources is best assured by those who have made both financial and labor investments to become owners and caretakers of their land.*

***Even though local, state and federal governments own more than 40% of the land in the United States, some groups seek additional purchases of private property by, or through, the government. The continued purchase and taking of private property by the government or government funded organizations, using government funds, erode the very foundation on which this country, its principles, freedoms, economy, health and productivity of its natural resources are based.**

118. AAW recognizes that a family farm, ranch, or private timber concern is a form of business enterprise in which the entrepreneurial decisions are made by individuals engaged in the production of food, feed, fiber, fuel, forest products and/or flora for profit, which provides a major source of income and capital for investment.

119. AAW opposes the elimination of productive agriculture lands to constructed artificial wetland.

120. AAW opposes any authority given to the United Nations or foreign governments regarding the use or management of any federal, state or private properties within the boundaries of the U.S. and its holdings.

121. AAW opposes the designation of scenic byways, flyways, waterways or any other designations and the resulting restrictions on private lands in the U.S.

Public Lands

122. AAW supports access to federal lands for multiple uses including but not limited to: agriculture, grazing, mining, drilling, forestry, habitat and recreation.

123. AAW supports a policy of no net loss of taxable private property.

124. AAW opposes preferential treatment to sellers or buyers of private land through tax incentives or other measures to nonprofit entities.

125. AAW supports efforts to prevent entities from setting up "shell" foundations in order to obtain funds on conservation payments.

126. AAW supports restricting and monitoring the conditions by which private non-profit groups and non-governmental organization (NGO) groups can purchase land with the intent to sell or transfer ownership of that land to the government.

The federal government must show where their authority comes from to acquire land or take the use of the land.

127. AAW strongly opposes the designation of additional wilderness areas.

Wilderness areas are wild lands with special “legal” protections granted by the U.S. Congress that cannot be changed. They cannot be managed to save species, habitat or old growth forests, or to suppress fire. Natural forces prevail. In 1964, when the Wilderness Act was passed, there were 9.1 million acres set aside in 13 states (54 areas). In 2007 there are almost 107.5 million acres in 44 states and Puerto Rico (702 areas). – Numbers from Wilderness.net

UPDATE – As of Jan. 20, 2009 The National Wilderness Preservation System currently contains 704 wilderness areas comprising 107,361,680 acres. The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 signed by President Obama 03/30/09 designates 51 new wilderness areas + additional acreage to 26 existing areas for a total of 2,091,955 additional acres to the wilderness system.

Private Property Rights

128. AAW supports legislation that reinforces our citizens’ constitutional private property rights that requires just and complete compensation at highest and best use for the taking of private property.
129. AAW opposes “takings” legislation that devalues land by:
 - regulatory action,
 - activities that negatively impact adjacent land by creating buffer zones, scenic viewsheds, and scenic viewscapes, or
 - activities that impact landowner’s rights in any way, or
 - by endorsing conservation easements.

AAW contends that water is property [the Hage vs. United States Takings case, January 26, 2004]. Any reallocation of the water permitted for private use by government is a taking. Government is obligated to compensate the owners of privately held water at the highest and best use of the property when the public deems a necessary beneficial use of that water.

130. AAW strongly supports private property owners and the sovereignty of states above the federal government regarding allocations of water within their borders.
131. AAW urges Congress to take no action outside those enumerated powers found in Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution that would infringe upon the rights left to the states and to the people. Article 1, Section 8, enumerates these rights, which are limited.
132. AAW opposes the right to trespass onto private property by land or water access.

Eminent Domain

133. AAW opposes the use of Eminent Domain for the purchase of private property from an owner to transfer to another private or commercial owner.
134. AAW supports compensation at highest and best use when property is taken.
135. AAW opposes the use of Eminent Domain for economic development and additional tax revenue accruing from such development.
136. AAW strongly opposes the taking of private property by postings on the Internet or proper notification only.
137. AAW supports every effort to use existing public land before imposing Eminent Domain.
138. AAW opposes the taking of private property by eminent domain to construct the planned NAFTA Transportation Corridor that will reach from Mexico to Canada.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

America’s security and economic solvency depend upon our military and domestic food and energy supply and must therefore take precedence over the regulations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

139. AAW supports the value of human life, safety, and welfare above any other species whether endangered, threatened or not listed.
140. AAW supports the repeal of the existing Endangered Species Act. Funding for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) needs to be discontinued until such time as the Act is re-authorized and the means for funding re-evaluated.
141. AAW supports a requirement that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Critical Habitat designations be completed before restrictive regulatory action is taken. Concurrent social, economic and environmental cost/benefit analyses and compensatory adjustments for takings deemed necessary for species protection is required.

142. AAW supports an ESA consultation process requiring the use of sound, verifiable, research-based science that is transparent, quantifiable, and assesses the economic impact to agriculture and natural resource production, giving equal weight to historical data of the land before a listing is approved.
143. AAW supports eliminating subjective biological units (sub-species, populations, stocks) from ESA action and pursue recovery of only significant species.
144. AAW supports the protection of property owners from regulatory takings by local, state and national agencies. If property is taken, owner must be compensated at highest and best use and for loss of income and expenses.
145. AAW supports allowing a state or private property owner who is accused of an ESA violation to continue with existing farming, logging, fishing or mining practices until the suit is resolved. No fine should be assessed unless a violation is proven.
146. AAW supports requiring feasible recovery plans and selection of recovery measures that are most cost effective and have the least negative social and economic impact.
147. AAW strongly supports accountability by reviewing and evaluating recovery plans every five years.
148. AAW supports allowing an administrative appeal of qualified major decisions and/or judicial review by directly affected parties.
149. AAW supports excluding a specie from consideration as endangered or threatened, or de-list it, if it is abundant in any location.
150. AAW urges that the EPA acknowledges "extinction" as a natural process of evolution.
151. AAW believes only native species should be considered for endangered species status.
152. AAW opposes the U.S. listing of endangered species in foreign countries.

Once listed, the ESA authorizes the U.S. Treasury to spend American taxpayer money acquiring foreign land, water, and other property interests to "protect" these species. As one way for America to spend money on foreign property, Congress and the federal bureaucracy have authorized several "Debt for Nature" swaps which allow the U.S. Treasury to forgive ("trade") foreign debt or loans made by the American taxpayers to foreign countries with the hope that the country will stop property use and development to protect these species on the American endangered species list. Some of these "Debt for Nature" swaps include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like the Nature Conservancy or World Wildlife Fund buying the foreign debt to the U.S. for pennies on the dollar.

INVASIVE SPECIES

AAW does not view all non-native species as invasive, nuisance, noxious, or harmful. It is well known that migratory flyways can and do change. Weather, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes can and do cause variations to migration. Oceanic currents can and do cause variations to historic ranges of species. These and other acts of nature cause relocation of species.

153. AAW believes the phrase, "invasive species" needs to be defined as a specific set of scientific criteria and this distinction needs to be made clear in open debate.

"Invasive species" means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. "Native species" means, with respect to a particular ecosystem, a species that, other than as a result of an introduction, historically occurred or currently occurs in that ecosystem.

FORESTRY & TIMBER

Our nation has more forested acres and trees today than a hundred years ago. Natural and renewable, trees offer many benefits to our communities, nation, and world. Trees can provide goods, recreation, and wildlife habitats. They clean and cool the air we breathe and protect our water and fisheries.

We have a moral obligation to make wise use of these resources and make sure these forests are standing tall for future generations to utilize and enjoy.

Actively managed forests are healthy forests and could play an important role in our climate's change. A healthy tree can absorb 10 pounds of carbon in a year from the atmosphere. The best sequesters of carbon are healthy growing

trees. Old and decaying trees release carbon back into the atmosphere and become part of the carbon problem. Timber owners are able to market carbon credits. The removal of woody biomass and additional timber harvest would make materials available to be used for generating electricity, bio-diesel, bio-ethanol, or other heavy fuel oils and aid in carbon sequestration. Restoration Forestry is the most effective tool to accomplish forest health restoration and reduce wildfires. This includes harvesting trees, storing carbon in wood products and actively replanting trees.

154. AAW urges Congress to encourage the Forest Service to implement their National Forest Plans by:

- removing the excessive carbon emissions from the sick and burned acres they own,
- reducing the carbon emissions from public lands at the same rate expected of private enterprises and businesses, and
- reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires on our public lands and forests.

Catastrophic wildfires take their toll in property and lives as well as air and water quality degradation and environmental devastation. Fire-fighting costs account for nearly 50% of the Forest Service's annual budget.

A study entitled "Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Four California Wildfires; Opportunities to Prevent and Reverse Environmental and Climate Impacts" authored by Dr. Thomas Bonnicksen, Professor Emeritus of Forest Science at Texas A & M University focused on four separate wildfires in California: the Angora Fire (2007), the Fountain Fire (1992), the Star Fire (2001), and the Moonlight Fire (2007). These fires burned 144,825 acres. The initial combustion had a carbon footprint equal to 1,864,624 passenger cars for one year. The long term effect of decay had a carbon footprint equal to an additional 5,098,009 passenger cars for one year.

155. AAW supports creating a separate fund to allow extraordinary wildfires to be treated the same as other natural disasters.

Our public national forests are sick and dying. Today's public forests are growing 10 to 100 times more trees per acre than the forested lands at the time Native Americans managed them by fire. The overcrowded forests result in insect damage, disease, and the loss of groundwater. These unhealthy conditions make the forests vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires.

Forest fires are more frequent, bigger in size, and catastrophic in nature. Forest fire costs do not reflect the cost of the burned trees, watershed damages, homes, ranches, wildlife, or livestock that are lost. Fire costs now account for nearly 50% of the annual Forest Service budget. The most devastating wildfires, only 1% of all wildfires, consume 95% of all the burned acres and 85% of all the suppression costs. Creating a separate fund would allow these extraordinary emergency fires to be treated the same way as other natural disasters.

156. AAW urges Congress to release to multiple uses the acres that do not qualify for wilderness and settle the 40-year-old issue of roadless designation.

157. AAW opposes the sale of national forest lands to fund the purchase of more federal lands.

Fifty-one percent of our nation's forests are privately owned and more than 1/3 of these acres are part of a farm, an important part of the rural landscape.

158. AAW urges the Farm Bill to offer cost sharing towards environmental quality incentives and tax incentives for developing renewable energy sources (including woody biomass), habitats, and/or water improvements.

159. AAW urges the expansion of the domestic forest products market.

160. AAW urges Congress to amend the Equal Access to Justice Act.

Requiring a significant bond based on losses incurred by delays, limiting amounts awarded, and requiring plaintiffs to pay government's attorneys' fees if they lose would deter frivolous lawsuits.

WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Civil Works

161. AAW supports the maintenance and continued investment for development of dams, levees, canals and other engineered facilities that provide multiple benefits to people and nature.

162. AAW urges Congress to immediately reaffirm the initial, established purpose of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The purposes of flood control, navigation and irrigation projects have served both the government and the economic development efforts of this country.

163. AAW supports the funding and construction of new 1200-foot locks and maintenance of the existing 600-foot locks for the

Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System.

164. AAW supports the implementation of a plan for systemic flood protection for the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, and the Red River of the North.
165. AAW opposes the use of Inland Waterways and Harbor Maintenance trust funds for operations and maintenance.
- 166.

Trust funds should fund only new construction as intended when authorized. Flood control, irrigation, energy production and transportation should remain as primary purposes for public water storage and management investments. Fish and wildlife “protections” and other environmental concerns should be added using research to ensure that social-economic costs are justifiable with devaluation and/or harm to individuals, communities, or states being fully compensated.

167. AAW urges Congress to disallow immense public investments, such as dams, to be arbitrarily and capriciously destroyed. Prior to any purposeful alteration or destruction of these public investments or their uses, the government should show research-based scientific and economic proof that this action is vital to national security and necessary for benefit to humans as well as to the environment, as required under the original intent of the authority of the Corps of Engineers.
168. AAW advocates policies that promote abundance of water resources.

Navigable Waters

169. AAW strongly encourages retention of the word “navigable” in the Clean Water Act.
170. AAW opposes proposed changes to Clean Water Act that expand federal government’s jurisdiction over all intrastate waters including groundwater, ditches, culverts, pipe, desert washes, sheet flow, erosion features, farm and stock ponds and prior converted cropland.

Navigable Waters — Waters that provide a channel of continuous flow for commerce and transportation of people and goods

Water Contracts, Water Rights and Ownership

A dedicated and secure water supply is critical to national and food security.

171. AAW urges Congress to honor its contractual obligations to agricultural water users throughout the West who rely on federally constructed water projects for irrigation supplies. Full contract supplies are essential to maintain the West’s productive farmland.
172. AAW does not support land retirement as a means of relieving the U.S. government’s contractual obligations to provide water and/or drainage service to the West.
173. AAW opposes foreign ownership of water and water treatment and distribution utilities.
174. AAW opposes federal purchase of privately held water rights in cases where the federal government would then hold the water right.
175. AAW supports a prominent role for agriculture in determining water allocation due to the economic and social necessity of producing enough food, fiber, and fuel to accommodate the domestic population and to build the economy by marketing value added and surplus commodity products.

Wetlands

176. AAW objects to a national policy of avoiding impacts to wetlands, versus previous policy of minimizing impacts to wetlands.
177. AAW objects to public funds supporting easements or buyouts to non-profit groups for large-scale wetland restoration that removes agricultural land from local tax rolls and other local economic activity.
178. AAW supports the Supreme Court ruling that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not have jurisdiction over wetlands that are not adjacent to navigable waters.

WATER QUALITY

Livestock

179. AAW opposes efforts to regulate livestock manure as hazardous waste under Comprehensive Environment Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) or other environmental laws. We support legislation to clarify that manure was never intended to be regulated as hazardous waste.

Non-Point Source

180. AAW supports a *national water quality policy on nonpoint source pollution* that gives states the control to develop and manage water quality programs specific to the states' own watershed issues.

Programs under the Clean Water Act should promote the use of voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) by rural landowners, agricultural producers and urban natural resources users.

Given flexibility within state programs, local watershed stakeholder committees can develop and implement Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) designed to incorporate BMPs and monitoring as key components to the protection of water resources and the prevention of future impairments.

181. AAW supports revising water quality standards based on real risk to human health as determined by research-based scientific methods.

Data and Monitoring

182. AAW strongly promotes funding the monitoring of targeted waterways and the collection of data for accurate decision-making in the allocation of state resources for water protection programs.
183. AAW expects federal and state elected officials and agency staff decision-makers to use credible, current records on historical data to establish reasonable and attainable year-round water temperature standards for rivers and streams.
184. AAW supports cost/benefit analysis and adequate funding including risk assessments before state and federal regulations are imposed on communities.
185. AAW objects to nutrient trading proposals, projects, or experiments that are based on questionable science and unsustainable economics. Government resources should only fund such projects that do not cause adverse effects on adjacent lands, river systems, and communities.

ENERGY

A well-developed diverse domestic energy supply is critical to national security.

186. AAW supports the 25 X '25 Initiative of having 25% of the U.S. renewable energy sources being produced by farms, ranches, and forests by the year 2025.
187. AAW supports the use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol, biodiesel, wind energy, and biomass fuels, because:
- alternative fuels are an abundant renewable resource;
 - alternative fuels are important to our nation's energy security; and
 - alternative fuels are environmentally friendly.
188. AAW supports development of domestic oil, coal, and natural gas supplies on public and private land as well as offshore, as applicable.
189. AAW supports the creation of new refineries and the continuous updating of existing refineries. Agriculture production and distribution is dependent on the oil industry.
190. AAW supports continued research of nuclear energy and development of new plants.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS

ANIMAL WELL-BEING

191. AAW supports the responsible treatment of animals and livestock industry participation in the development of any new policy to regulate treatment practices.
192. AAW opposes any legislation or regulations that would allow Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), or any other anti-animal industry activists access to slaughterhouses and private animal handling facilities for any reason at any time. Only highly qualified and uniformly trained states' department of agriculture employees should have access to properties for inspections at slaughterhouses or any other animal handling

facility; that the animal processing industry by its very nature is vulnerable to attacks by animal rights' groups.

193. AAW respectfully asks legislators, when they are approached by animal rights representatives to carry bills pertaining to animal health, to talk with actual livestock producers about the legislation in order to learn why producers use these practices for the well being of their animals.
194. AAW supports the responsible use of animals in research.
195. AAW supports legislation establishing strong federal criminal penalties and civil remedies for violent, threatening, obstructive, and destructive conduct that is intended to injure, intimidate, or interfere with animal enterprises and research.
196. AAW supports legislation that establishes assistance for security programs at research facilities.
197. AAW supports the right of farmers to protect their records from public scrutiny.
198. AAW supports the legalization of horse slaughter plants to guarantee the humane and environmentally sensitive disposition of aged and infirm horses in the US.
199. AAW supports the sale, possession and humane transportation of horses for processing across state and international borders.
200. AAW supports the use of standardized best management practices in livestock carcass disposal.

CLEAN AIR

201. AAW supports a clean air standard providing an agricultural exemption for dust particulate matter generated as a result of agricultural activities. Any definition including dust as a contaminant must exempt agriculture and silviculture. Any increase in dust regulation must show proof of validated scientific justification for the increased regulation.
202. AAW supports research efforts to identify agriculture's role in carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration, the process by which carbon gases are captured and stored, presents potential technological solutions to the build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

It is important that regulation of greenhouse gases (GHG) not adversely affect our ability to provide a safe and abundant food supply. AAW contends that while it is possible some producers might gain some benefits, it is far more certain that all producers would face higher costs. If U.S. trading partners do not adopt similar emission reduction strategies, it will severely erode the international competitive position of the U.S.

CROP PROTECTION

Pesticide Application and Runoff

203. AAW urges passage of HR 872 during the 112th Congress to define the jurisdiction of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) in the regulation of registered pesticides labeled for use on or near waterways. AAW supports the intent of The Regulatory Burden Reduction Act of 2011 (H.R. 872) to define this statutory authority within FIFRA and replace the authority granted by the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals to regulate pesticide use on or near waterways under the Clean Water Act. AAW supports the leadership role that Congress is taking to remove ambiguities between these two important statutes governing the use of resource management tools and resource protection.

Chlorothalonil

204. AAW supports the current labeled uses of the fungicide, Chlorothalonil, and urges that National Marine and Fisheries Service follow a measured and scientifically-thorough review before finalizing its biological opinion of the product and its uses in fruits, nuts, vegetables, turf and nursery markets.

Methyl Bromide

205. AAW supports the continuation of the allowable exemptions to the methyl bromide phase-out under the Montreal Protocol and the U.S. Clear Air Act. This fumigant is a vital tool for U.S. producers to the viability of their crops and export fumigation uses for the stability of global agricultural markets.
206. AAW supports the re-registration of current fumigants and continued development of new fumigants for crop production and export opportunities.

Fumigation and Food Quality Protection Act Resolution

207. AAW urges regulators to provide for additional input from stakeholders through review of any scientific inconsistencies or unwarranted limitations in the new restrictions for aluminum/magnesium and sulfuric fluoride phosphine fumigants.

Anhydrous Ammonia Fertilizer

208. AAW supports the chemical industry's anti-methamphetamine task force activities regarding the prevention of the use of anhydrous ammonia for illegal purposes.

Chemical Registration

209. AAW urges Congress to continue oversight of EPA in its review of Section 18, Section 24C and Crisis Exemption requests by the states, manufacturers and third parties.

210. AAW supports the development of a revised process by which biological opinions are derived under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA). Under the current process, the reviewing federal departments do not give stakeholders adequate time to provide comments; do not provide all required information on which to comment; fail to address best available scientific data; do not provide basis for omitting available and highly relevant data and information; and, therefore, make incomplete or inaccurate assessments of a product and flawed evaluations of its effect on a listed species. Under ESA these departments consult with EPA, which uses the biological opinion of a specific chemical as a basis for new labeled use restrictions having economic impact on the food supply and the producer while providing no additional protection for listed species.

211. AAW supports an USEPA review and determination of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for atrazine that meets the drinking water levels of comparison. AAW supports a federal policy for the use of the best available scientific data/information in the decision-making process for regulating crop production tools.

212. AAW opposes a zero risk standard for spray drift. With today's technology – and the ability to test parts per trillion – it is impossible to get to zero. The requirement should be that products be applied according to the label law.

NUTRITION

213. AAW supports federal, state, and local activities to improve nutritional intake and establish healthy eating habits. Balancing information for consumer and schools recommending a daily diet of meats, dairy, fruits, whole grains and vegetables to support healthy living.

AAW, to address the obesity epidemic in the United States with a special emphasis on children, support a call to action to improve nutrient intakes and establish healthy eating habits overall. There should be an emphasis in school programs to consume more nutrient-dense foods such as low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products, in addition to lean meats, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while limiting intakes of sodium, solid fat, added sugars and refined grains.

FOOD SAFETY

214. AAW supports the value of the safe and affordable food supply for our nation and the world. AAW supports a federal standard to maintain the US food supply while maintaining consumer food confidence in the safety of US agricultural products.

215. To insure the safety of our food supply, AAW supports:

- the implementation of animal health emergency management and eradication programs,
- traceability of all food products,
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP),
- continued worldwide surveillance activities,
- monitoring of the status of foreign and domestic animal diseases,
- and inspections at the border to maintain a safe and abundant food supply for the American people and the world population.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

216. AAW supports continued research and development of tools and techniques that would support the advancement of agricultural production and processes in the United States for the industry and the consumer.

217. AAW supports the management and utilization of baseline data supplied by producers through the certified farm business management educational program..

BIOTECHNOLOGY

218. AAW supports increased research and development of agricultural biotechnology providing producers a greater range of integrated pest management tools to promote sustainable production reducing energy consumption and associated environmental effects. Biotechnology offers environmental benefits by increasing production yields, using herbicide tolerant crops, enhancing soil moisture content, reducing erosion and limiting carbon dioxide emissions.
219. AAW supports the coordinated framework and extensive testing procedures of biotechnological products by the U.S. regulatory agencies (EPA, FDA, and USDA).
220. AAW supports the position that it is unnecessary, confusing and costly to the consumer to label biotechnological products or processes.
221. AAW supports the position that any Biosafety Protocol that is implemented should be based on risk assessments and research-based science.
222. AAW condemns the theft or destruction of agricultural research and intellectual property. Research has tremendous benefits to the farmer and the consumer. Genetically-enhanced products have the capability of improving human health, and solving world environmental and nutritional problems.
223. AAW stands behind long-standing APHIS regulatory noxious weed authority that evaluates genetically-engineered plants that are no different than any other plant using the defined criteria that a plant must cause direct harm or physical injury to a protected interest to be considered a noxious plant. Risk assessment should not be made based entirely on economic factors associated with the plant.

HOMELAND SECURITY

224. AAW condemns all forms of terrorism. As providers of this nation's food and fiber supply, we recognize the need to increase our vigilance to protect the production of agriculture products (food, feed, fuel, fiber and flora and the inputs required for production).
225. AAW supports the Bioterrorism Act and efforts to educate producers about ways to safeguard our nation's food and fiber supply and agricultural inputs from acts of terror.
226. AAW supports the McCain-Kyl 10 Point Border Security Plan.

EDUCATION

227. AAW believes in an educated public. Furthermore, agricultural education and education about our nation's food and fiber system must be based on factual information and research-based science. We encourage agriculturalists to work cooperatively on common issues through education.
228. AAW supports the intent of the Carl D. Perkins Act with increased funding for vocational (career and technical) agriculture education.
229. AAW supports a national Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program with continued funding and support for a national director and the national conference
230. AAW opposes any authority given to the United Nations or foreign governments regarding the education of America's children.
231. AAW opposes using public education as a tool to indoctrinate America's children (pre-school through university) to support any political agenda.