

# Agriculture Insights

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## BUSH VS. GORE: AGRICULTURAL AGEN- DAS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

On Tuesday, Nov. 7, you will have an opportunity to vote for our country's next president.

The two major party candidates, Gov. George W. Bush (R) and Vice President Al Gore (D), both have interesting plans for U.S.'s agriculture industry.

Overview: In order to gain the perspective of a broadcast journalist who has interviewed Bush and Gore on agricultural issues, I spoke to Ken Root. Root is the host of "Agri-Talk" (www.agri-talk.com), a syndicated daily radio talk that explores current agricultural issues.

When asked what the number one agricultural issue concerning farmers in this election, Root said farmers would generally

favor the candidate who, as president, would do the least in terms of enacting environmental regulations negatively affecting agriculture. Root acknowledges both candidates are concerned with the loss of family farms and have similar plans to take away barriers to exports and build trade relations, but reminds farmers to keep focused on the candidate's environmental plans.

• Gov. George W. Bush's Agenda: Bush supports a market-oriented farm policy, which would respond to market demands rather than government programs. But in order for the agriculture industry to adapt to the challenges of the global marketplace, Bush believes the government should provide a strong safety net to help manage economic downturns. This would include crop insurance reform and tax-deferred Farm and Ranch

Management accounts, which would allow farmers to reserve a substantial percentage of their net farm income in a tax deferred account that could be used during downturns.

As part of his overall plan to reduce taxes, Bush supports the elimination of the estate tax, which currently makes it more difficult to pass family farms from one generation to the next. Bush would also like to speed up the development of technologically advanced farm products, such as ethanol, to help strengthen the agriculture community with new exportable goods. Bush believes one avenue in achieving this would be through a permanent extension of the research and development tax credit.

Private property rights are another key issue for Bush, who supports requiring the federal government to evaluate the impact of regulatory initiatives on property rights. He recognizes that burdensome regulations and property laws have a real cost impact to the farm economy. Bush is committed to free trade and the elimination of agricultural export subsidies and tariffs. The restoration of Presidential trade negotiating authority is a key goal he hopes to achieve as President. Bush supports China's entry into the World Trade Organization and will work to allow U.S. products into overseas markets.

• Vice President Al Gore's

Agenda: Gore supports changing the Freedom to Farm Act, which he believes will help increase farm income and reduce emergency aid. He would enact counter-cyclical income assistance that attempts to stabilize farm income on a year-to-year basis along with federal insurance policies. To provide a safety net when crop prices and yields fall, Gore would work to increase payments to farmers based on commodity specific five-year averages. Reform for crop insurance is another key goal for Gore. He would work to strengthen the effectiveness and affordability by increasing federal support for insurance.

Gore supports the reduced concentration of agribusiness. He believes America stands to lose many family farms as the ag-industry is even more dominated by large, corporate enterprises. Gore supports efforts for a greater transparency to the marketplace in order to stop price discrimination. Gore said he would enforce antitrust laws to fight anticompetitive practices. He will expand the Packers and Stockyard Act to include poultry and feedlots. Gore supports farmer-owned cooperatives and will help establish new co-ops focused on value-added processing.

Gore also advocates environmentally sound land management of farms as another key goal to achieve clean waterways, pure drinking water, and healthy

air. Gore believes this will help stabilize farm income. He will provide incentives for voluntary environmental practices such as conservation incentive payments. Gore supports developing ethanol and other new agriculture-based products to increase the nation's farm income. He would also like to expand trade in agriculture while reducing tariffs. He supports China's entry in the World Trade Organization.

Remember to vote. Election day is approaching quickly. If you need to register, please visit your county courthouse or local post office before Oct. 10. On the Internet, visit election.com or explore the presidential candidates at HYPERLINK <http://www.georgewbush.com> and HYPERLINK <http://www.gore2000.org>

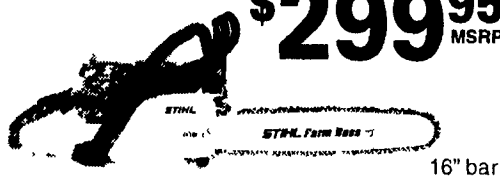
The Lancaster Chamber's 24th Annual Agriculture-Industry Banquet will be Nov. 21 at the Lancaster Host Resort. The reception will begin at 5 p.m. and dinner starts at 6:30 p.m. For more information or to register for banquet tickets, visit HYPERLINK <http://www.lancaster-chamber.com>. Please send any questions or comments to Brent Landis at The Lancaster Chamber at HYPERLINK <mailto:blandis@lcci.com> or call (717) 397-3531, ext. 34.

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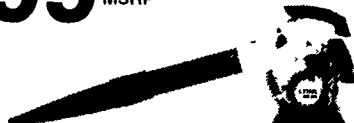
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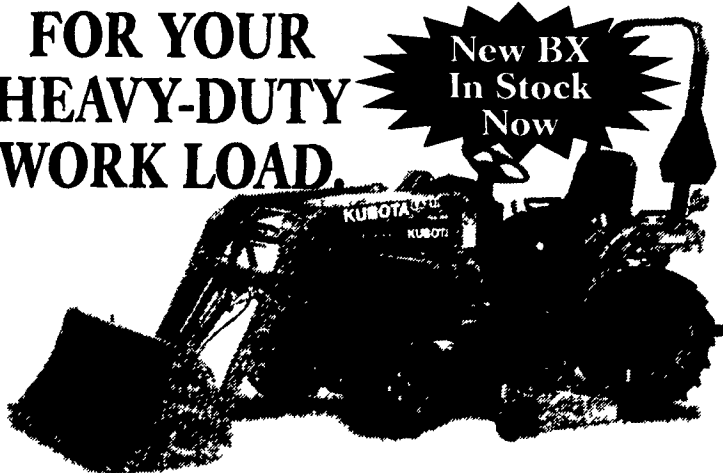
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