

Farm Bureau Announces Legislative Priorities for 2001

GLENMONT, N.Y. — New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm advocacy organization in the state, recently announced its legislative priorities for the upcoming year.

At their State Annual Meeting held last month in Buffalo, New York Farm Bureau Delegates voted upon their federal and state policies for the year 2001. Policies are developed originally at the County level, and then make their way up to the State Annual Meeting. Farm Bureau leaders then select priority issues from the over 1,000 member driven policies.

Legislative priorities are based on several factors, such as whether the issue has a broad-based agricultural impact; is of significant interest to county Farm Bureaus; impacts farmers' ability to conduct business; attracts active member participation and has a reasonable chance of being resolved.

The 2001 legislative priorities for New York Farm Bureau are as follows:

Federal Priority Issues

Dairy

Continue to work toward expanding the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact to include New York; establish a Southeast Dairy Compact; and support legislation that prohibits the use of ultra-filtered milk in cheese making. We will also engage in a critical review of the impact of imported milk solids into our markets; and work to modify the unified strategy on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

FQPA Implementation

Actively monitor EPA's risk assessment of pesticides used to protect New York crops, providing comments consistent with Farm Bureau policy, and pursue active communication between Farm Bureau and EPA. We will continue participation in state-wide coalitions to monitor FQPA's impact on New York agriculture.

Labor

Secure passage of a guest worker program and H2A reform. We will address agricultural worker supply issues; work with coalitions to obtain a freeze on the Adverse Effect Wage Rate; and continue to monitor ergonomic standards implementation and other initiatives that would have a negative impact and place unnecessary restrictions on agricultural employers.

Trade

Continue to work with New York commodity organizations on trade issues and support the efforts of Northeast coalitions for equal consideration of all U.S. crops during trade negotiations; and work with USDA to quantify the impact of imports on New York agriculture.

Continue to work with New York commodity organizations, the Department of Agriculture & Markets and our congressional delegation to identify and rectify unfair trade practices having a negative impact on our producers.

Risk Management/Market Loss Assistance

Develop a Northeast coalition to identify and support neces-

sary changes to current crop insurance programs; secure direct financial assistance for weather related crop disasters; and pursue a voluntary based conservation program to enhance the viability of agriculture while preserving open space and clean water.

We will also work to establish proactive risk management tools as "eligible projects" under the Risk Management Act of 2000.

State Priority Issues

Agricultural Investment

The agricultural industry needs to be a significant part of the state's plans to revitalize the economy in upstate New York. We support full funding of the Agricultural Initiative and Grow New York, a promotion, marketing and research program administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Environmental Protection Fund

Increased funding is needed to address the tremendous pressure on agriculture in urbanizing areas. Additional funding is also needed to assist farmers in meeting environmental regulations for non point source pollution prevention. Farm Bureau will work to increase the farmland protection and the non point source pollution prevention funding sources in the Environmental Protection Fund.

Civil Justice Reform

Support of legislation to rectify the current abuses of New York's Civil Justice system and liability initiatives consistent with Farm Bureau policy.

Equine inherent risk legislation and liability relief for U-Pick organizations are vitally important to reduce the high cost of liability insurance for New York farmers.

School Property Tax Credit
Support inclusion of Christmas tree growers and rented land within the School Property Tax Credit, expansion of STAR to all farms, and the inclusion of "C" corporation family farms in the School Property Tax Credit.

Agricultural Biotechnology
We recommend full support

for the Gen★NY★Sis initiative, designed to promote New York as a leader in biotechnology research and innovation; and the continued investment in life sciences, particularly the applied research into agricultural biotechnology. We also recommend full public disclosure of all research results, so that the public may be better educated on the benefits and risks of biotechnology.

Additional information is available on all of the above mentioned issues by calling New York Farm Bureau at (518) 436-8495.

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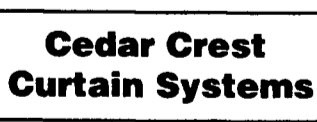




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