State or Local Mandated Soil Conservation Practices

There is growing concern in the media about sediment loss from farm fields.

Steve Morse, executive director of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership

- "But after 70 years of voluntary programs, here we are today with agriculture the major polluter of our rivers. We need a tougher approach."

Farm Bureau Policy

We support:

- Voluntary soil conservation efforts to promote minimum tillage, shelter belts and other best management practices;
- Placement of buffer strips in areas where erosion is occurring and cost-sharing for installation and maintenance of buffer strips;
- Environmental protection through conservation and the implementation of BMPs (Best Management Practices);
- BMPs having input and approval of a group of independent professionals including farm operators and managers;
- Close cooperation between local, state and federal agencies and the private sector using current, proven, sound, reasonable, scientific research, policies and practices in the development and use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) concerning feedlot management, air quality and nutrient management; and
- Implementing Best Management Practices in a reasonable time frame with financial and technical assistance available.

We oppose:

- Government regulation of tillage practices;
- Mandatory ordinances or laws controlling erosion; and
- Mandatory implementation of Best Management Practices relating to nitrogen fertilizers.

Discussion Questions

Does current Farm Bureau policy address your concerns on this issue?

Does Farm Bureau policy need to address the economics of implementing BMPs?

Should local units of government be preempted from regulating soil conservation practices above state and federal regulations?

Are we missing anything on this issue from your experience on your farm?

Renewable Transportation Fuel

Current state law only allows for ethanol to be blended with gasoline.

Bio-butanol production is starting in at least one location in Minnesota.

There appears to be interest in other bio-butanol production starting in the near future.

Current state law prohibits blending bio-butanol or any other bio-fuel with gasoline.

Farm Bureau Policy

We support:

- Efforts to educate and promote the expanded use of renewable fuels, such as ethanol, bio-diesel, and methane;
- Promotion and expanded use of grains for fuel, efforts to limit the importation of ethanol and ethanol blends, and also extending the current per gallon state tax exemption; and
- Funding for additional research and development of cellulosic ethanol and/or bio-fuels.

Discussion Questions

Should Farm Bureau policy support changing state law so bio-butanol can be blended with gasoline?

Should this change be limited to only bio-butanol or should other bio-fuels be included in the change?

Should state law remain unchanged on this issue?

Agritourism

There is growing interest in more farmers participating in agritourism activities.

Many local Farm Bureaus conduct Breakfast of the Farms and other activities to get the public onto farms.

Legislation was introduced in 2012 that proposed a farmer conducting agritourism activites would not be liable for injury, damage, or death of a participant resulting from the inherent risks of agritourism activities.

Farm Bureau Policy

We do not have policy specific to this issue.

Discussion Questions

Should Farm Bureau support liability protection for farmers conducting agritourism activities?

Should this liability protection including events such as Breakfast on the Farms and farm tours?

Should there be limits on how far this liability protection is extended?

Animal Facility Interference

Several states are working on legislation to address interference at animal facilities. In general the proposed legislation would:

- Make it illegal to create or posses, without the consent of the owner, a visual or sound recording made at the animal facility;
- Make it illegal to hold on to any recording of mistreatment of animals without taking some type of corrective action immediately; and
- Penalize employees who gain employment at an animal facility under false pretenses.

Farm Bureau Policy

We support:

- Efforts to hold anyone, convicted of unlawful release of animals, liable for all damages;
- Increased criminal penalties for people convicted of trespassing with the intent to release animals from any enclosure; and
- Acts of animal vandalism and intentional introduction of animal diseases being treated as acts of terrorism and classified as felonies.

Discussion Questions

Does current Farm Bureau policy cover the concerns you have on this issue for your farming operation?

Should Farm Bureau policy directly deal with animal facility interference?

If so, what should our policy be?

Are there other situations of animal facility interference that need to be addressed?

Environmental Review

The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board is reviewing our environmental review procedures.

The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is one of the processes under review.

An EAW is mandatory if a feedlot is over a certain size, if a business increases production by certain amount or after a certain amount of time.

Farm Bureau Policy

We support:

- No Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) being required without an expansion of livestock numbers on a farm; and
- Removing the “same geographic area” from the EAW requirement criteria and basing the need for an EAW on a site by site basis only.

Discussion Questions

What should be the trigger mechanisms for requiring the completion of an EAW?

Should an EAW be required if all the environmental concerns of a project are addressed through the permit process (feedlot permit), regulated by other laws (Wetlands Conservation Act) or subject to local controls (land use zoning and conditional use permits)?

RESOLUTION SUBMITTAL FORM

County: _____

Contact person: **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____

Please check one of the following (use MFBF for state issue and AFBF for national issue and refer to 2012 policy book):

___ Revise current policy: MFBF Policy #: _____ AFBF Policy #: _____

___ New resolution: MFBF Policy #: _____ AFBF Policy #: _____

___ Local issue

Resolution: (Please make sure to type the policy language with new language underlined and deleted language with a line through it)

Explain why the resolution is needed : (100 words or less)

This resolution was approved at the Annual Meeting of this county Farm Bureau:

_____ **Yes** _____ **No**

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FROM BEFORE OCTOBER 5, 2012 VIA MAIL OR FAX – 651-768-2159 OR
EMAIL – susan.duncomb@fbmn.org

PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE FROM FOR EACH RESOLUTION SUBMITTED. YOU DO NOT NEED TO SUBMIT RESOLUTIONS REAFFIRMING CURRENT POLICY.

Three D's of Policy Development

- D – Define the issue.
- D – Determine the facts
  - Determine if this is an agriculture issue Farm Bureau should be working on
  - Determine if the issue is already covered in current Farm Bureau policy
- D – Decide on a solution