

## AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS

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American Farmers & Ranchers is a general farm organization, which has been representing family farmers, ranchers and rural Americans since 1905. It is the oldest and one of the largest general farm and rural organizations in Oklahoma, with over 100,000 members.

With its broadly based farm, ranch, rural and community membership, American Farmers & Ranchers is known as the “Voice of the Family Farmer and Rural America.”

The members themselves make AFR policy. They do this through a system of annual conventions. Local and county organizations send platform recommendations to the state/national level for the policy committee’s review. The local and county organizations also send delegates to the annual convention to approve the program, which guides the organization’s policies.

Our policy directs the legislative action of the organization and represents the diverse and complex interests of the people of rural Oklahoma. AFR represents these issues in a non-partisan manner on a local, state and national level.

1 **AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS**

2 **2016 POLICY POSITIONS**

3 *Adopted February 19, 2016*

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1 **AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS**

2  
3 **PREAMBLE**

4  
5 We believe in this nation, under God, and for the great hope for eternal  
6 freedom, which it holds for humanity everywhere.

7 We re-affirm our convictions of the truth and the rightness of the ideals  
8 expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States  
9 and its Bill of Rights.

10 We pray our state and national leaders place national security and the  
11 preservation of our form of government as their foremost responsibility.

12 We support programs that will preserve the American system of family farms  
13 and encourage all commodity groups and all farmers and ranchers to cooperate in  
14 formulating solutions and promoting such.

15 Under our economic and political system, the family farm system of agriculture  
16 is the most productive and efficient in the world. Since the nation's beginning,  
17 family farmers and ranchers have brought forth from the soil new wealth in abundant  
18 production of food and fiber and even today agriculture remains the number one  
19 industry.

20  
21 **PURPOSE**

22  
23 The American Farmers & Ranchers' mission is to provide effective grassroots  
24 leadership for the enhancement and protection of farmers and ranchers, so their rural  
25 communities may thrive and prosper. Guided by its educational, cooperative and  
26 legislative principles, American Farmers & Ranchers is committed to work for the  
27 advancement of the quality of life for its membership and people everywhere.

28 We are also committed to providing a continuing, safe and stable supply of  
29 high quality food and fiber for consumers.

30 We support the right of farmers and ranchers to engage in modern farming and  
31 ranching practices which shall be forever guaranteed in this state. No law shall be  
32 enacted which abridges the right of farmers and ranchers to employ agricultural  
33 technology, modern livestock production and ranching practices.

34 American Farmers & Ranchers makes a concerted effort to properly inform  
35 consumers, legislative leaders and members of Congress of the problems confronting  
36 farmers and ranchers.

37 American Farmers & Ranchers strives to make aggressive efforts at the  
38 national, state and local levels to educate farmers and the general public on the  
39 policy and issue positions of other organizations when the position will benefit  
40 family farmers, ranchers or our rural communities, and oppose those issues which  
41 would negatively impact them.

42 The role of the family agricultural producer must be that of leadership and  
43 stewardship in preserving our natural resources.

44 The farm and ranch family and its welfare, therefore, is the keystone of our  
45 policy. To ensure its continuation, we support a competitive market with fair price  
46 discovery.

47 These families have always been, and remain, the foremost stewards of this  
48 land. We have the responsibility to assure that this legacy, with its broad dispersion  
49 of land ownership, is passed on to our children and grandchildren.

50

1 **SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS**

2  
3  
4 **ANIMAL WELFARE**

5 We support animal welfare, as opposed to animal rights. We support scientifically sound  
6 methods of herdsmanship and the continued use of technological advancements in livestock  
7 production for American meat producers to efficiently supply protein to the world. We oppose  
8 any encroachment on traditional animal production practices.

9  
10 **COTTON**

11 We urge USDA to designate cottonseed as an “other oilseed” for purposes of the Agriculture  
12 Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs.

13  
14 **EARTHQUAKES**

15 We support research to determine if there are man-made causes contributing to earthquakes  
16 and/or seismic activity.

17  
18 **GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

19 We oppose disproportionate cuts which would adversely impact all agriculture programs at the  
20 state and federal level.

21  
22 We support a match of state money from the rainy day fund or a bond issue for the Oklahoma  
23 Conservation Commission to match currently available federal funding.

24  
25 We support the USDA Small Watershed Program and further support the State Legislature  
26 appropriating the funds necessary to secure the matching provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill.

27  
28 **POWER**

29 We urge National Farmers Union to work with the National Rural Electric Cooperative  
30 Association and other industry stakeholders to influence the EPA Clean Power Plan to allow  
31 adequate time to meet new emission standards and fuel source requirements.

32  
33 **PRISONS**

34 We urge that state prison facilities be maintained to meet present and future needs, including  
35 prison population, with adequate staffing levels and competitive compensation for employees.

36  
37 **STATE QUESTIONS**

38 We support State Question number 777.

39  
40 **USDA STANDARDS**

41 To protect U.S. food safety standards and the availability of domestically-produced agricultural  
42 products, we oppose lowering any U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) standard to accommodate  
43 any foreign country’s food and fiber import products.

44  
45 **WATER**

46 We support continued funding for the Oklahoma Water Resources Board’s Water Infrastructure  
47 Development Fund from the gross production tax.

48  
49 We support legislation defining water quality and water quantity as compelling state interests.

1 We oppose any Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal now, or in the future, to  
2 expand jurisdiction in a federal takeover of all waters in the U.S. All necessary action should be  
3 taken to preserve the water rights of the individual citizen and prevent further usurpation of those  
4 rights.

5  
6 **WILDLIFE**

7 We support the continued authority of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation officials  
8 to enter private lands when appropriate and necessary to carry out their duties under state law.  
9

10  
11 **COMMENDATIONS**

12  
13 We commend the state and federal agricultural agencies for their continuing efforts to support  
14 Oklahoma agriculture.  
15

16 We commend law enforcement officers and other emergency personnel including military  
17 personnel and veterans for their service. We further condemn unprovoked violence against them  
18 and support speedy adjudication and appropriate punishment for such acts.  
19

20 We commend each member, officer, local and county organization who participated in the AFR  
21 policy development process which led to the policy document developed and submitted to the  
22 membership for consideration and adoption.  
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## COOPERATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS

We support partnering with only those groups who embrace policies that are favorable to family agriculture and are considered pro-agriculture by the members we represent.

We support bona fide farm cooperatives and urge all farmers to support such in their locals to the fullest extent.

We encourage our members to participate in specialty commodity organizations, with respect to the commodities they grow or produce.

We support continuation of the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 that limits each member of a cooperative to one vote, regardless of the amount of stock or membership capital the membership owns.

We reaffirm our support for rural electric cooperatives and urge Congress to provide ample insured and guaranteed loan funds to meet the bona fide needs of the rural electric cooperative system and its customers.

We strongly encourage the U.S. Congress to oppose electric deregulation.

The U.S. Congress and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) are steadfastly moving toward restructuring the electric utility industry. We believe Oklahoma decisions are best left to the state and that any restructuring of Oklahoma's electric industry should embrace the following criteria:

1. Make certain we have continued universal access to electric power.
2. Make certain safeguards are in place to protect all Oklahomans from significantly increased rates and line costs from electric restructuring.
3. All classes of customers should be treated fairly.
4. Make certain rural Oklahomans gain the benefits of "competition," while prohibiting the discriminatory aspects of "competition" that left rural Oklahomans in the dark a few decades ago.
5. Make sure revenues generated by the electric industry remain revenue-neutral to all receiving entities as much as possible.
6. Equalize the cost of distributing electric energy statewide, and
7. Make certain the environment is protected and preserved.

We urge the preference clause be continued as a means of assuring the people will benefit from the sale of electric power from the federal dams, not just a few stockholders.

We support the principle that recreation pays a share of the cost of these projects.

1 We urge Congress, state legislators and ratemaking authorities to use their powers to  
2 protect the rights of rural cooperatives to generate their own power where they consider it best to  
3 do so.

4  
5 We urge Congress to continue to recognize the right of cooperatives to serve defense and  
6 other installations in their service areas.

7  
8 We oppose any effort, congressional or administrative, to weaken or dispose of our rural  
9 electric cooperatives or government-owned power-generating facilities.

10  
11 We support legislation to allow water associations and rural water districts to redeem loans  
12 before a sale to outside investors.

13  
14 We continue our support for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

15  
16 We support the concept of cooperative wind energy projects that benefit member  
17 landowners. Such projects should remain as cooperative ventures once construction is completed  
18 without resale to other private entities.

## 19 20 21 **FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

22  
23 We oppose any changes to our national anthem or Pledge of Allegiance.

24  
25 We urge active involvement in the effort to preserve the fundamental moral values of our  
26 society and uphold the Biblical principles upon which our nation was founded.

27  
28 We support the traditional family structure and believe that marriage is comprised of one  
29 man and one woman.

30  
31 American Farmers & Ranchers does not discriminate against any person on the basis of  
32 race, color, religion, national origin, sex/gender, age, disability or veteran status.

33  
34 We support all programs promoting Christian life.

35  
36 We oppose programs or practices promoting Satanism or witchcraft, and the recognition of  
37 such as valid religions.

38  
39 We support the groups that are currently fighting to stop the spread of pornography and  
40 sales of pornographic materials in our state, along with stronger penalties for violators.

41  
42 We strongly oppose television programming, electronic games and Internet sites not suited  
43 for full-family viewing.

44  
45 We oppose Federal Communication Commission (FCC) rulings that liberalize the use of  
46 offensive, explicit or profane language and gestures on network television.

47  
48 We support the people's right for quality, free television.

49  
50 We believe that determining whether life-sustaining procedures should be withheld or  
51 withdrawn for illness, disease, injury or extreme mental deterioration (such that there is no