

# **AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT**

## **- POLICY STATEMENT -**

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization anticipates that food production will need to double by 2050 to meet the nutritional needs of a world population. To meet this increasing demand, NY State farm and food sector businesses will need to be economically viable and good stewards of the environment to enhance the local communities in which they are located. The Grange family supports family-owned farms, the backbone of agricultural production.

The shrinking world economy has had a dramatic impact on NYS farms and consumers. NYS Grange advocates for revision of the Federal Milk Marketing system that incorporates 21<sup>st</sup> century dairy farm business realities with processing technologies and domestic and international markets. The Grange supports programs that secure a trained and legal labor force for the farm and food sector.

The Grange recognizes the importance of maintaining and/or improving the fresh water resources in and surrounding New York State. We support funding to mitigate non-point source pollution through such programs as the Agricultural Environmental Management program funded through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund and through funding secured from the federal government. The Grange notes the importance of clean air and supports the development of a cost effective viable disposal system for refuse from farms and rural upstate New York residents.

Many consumer groups have concerns over the treatment of animals. We support proper animal husbandry practices, but oppose any regulations that would give animals legal protection to which humans are entitled.

The NYS Grange concurs with National Grange believing in our democratic process. Our answer must be to join with all interested parties to educate the public about the realities of agriculture and the principles of nature. Legislators, judges, and our citizens need to understand how and why certain methods are used and how agriculture is an essential component in protecting and improving the environment and is critical to the security and future of the United States.

October 2009

## **AGRIBUSINESS**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS**

We support legislation that will enhance rural revitalization, agribusiness development, and micro-enterprise funding; further that we support the creation of a rural revitalization program;

creation of an agribusiness development micro-enterprise revolving fund; and the economic development of farm related businesses. (2009)

### **DEVELOPING NEW AGRICULTURAL JOBS**

We support a loan assistance grant program to help develop Agribusiness and set up basic business management training and technical assistance. (2009)

## **AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**

We request that the NYS Grange Standing Committee on Agriculture and Environment review the Council of Agriculture Organizations' legislative recommendations and policy statement with taking a priority interest on the Agriculture and Environment Subsection of the CAO policy. (2009)

## **AIR QUALITY**

### **OPENING BURNING**

We, while recognizing and supporting sound environmental policies, urge that the open burning ban regulations not be enacted until such time as a viable disposal infrastructure of items prohibited from being burned is in place. (2008)

### **POLLUTION-EMISSION STANDARDS**

We support tougher emission standards, and higher mileage rules for light trucks and sport utility vehicles that would significantly reduce pollution and the dangers of global climate change. (2007)

## **ANIMALS (DOMESTIC AND LIVESTOCK)**

### **ANIMAL DISEASE CENTER**

We oppose the relocation of Plum Island research and disease control, and support the renovation of Plum Island Animal Disease Center from a Biosecurity Level 3 facility to a Biosecurity Level 4 facility; that the Plum Island Animal Disease Center be renovated in such a manner to investigate cures and controls for diseases that could infect both human and animal population; and that Plum Island Animal Disease Center renovations include necessary security measures to prevent the release of pathogens into the environment resulting from human error or acts of terrorism. (2008)

## **DOG DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS**

We support assessing owners for damages caused by their dogs attacking livestock. (2008)

## **AGRICULTURAL ANIMAL DISPOSAL**

We request that deceased livestock be disposed of in a timely fashion and be tarped (covered) by their owners until proper disposal can take place in accordance with current Ag & Markets regulations. (2008)

## **ANIMAL WASTE LISTING**

We oppose the listing of animal waste under the hazardous waste regulations of the Environment Protection Agency (E.P.A). (2007)

## **ANIMALS AS “SENTIENT BEINGS”**

We oppose efforts to declare animals to be “sentient beings”, and all efforts to give animals the legal protections to which humans are entitled. (2007)

## **VACCINATION OF DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK**

We urge the N.Y.S. Legislature to change regulations for those engaged in animal husbandry to be allowed to purchase the necessary supplies directly from suppliers or manufacturers for animal immunization without veterinarian prescriptions. (2007)

## **NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (NAIS)**

We recommend that New York State Grange and National Grange should provide information and education about the National Animal Identification System. (2006)

## **NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM COSTS**

We recommend that National Animal Identification System costs implemented by the USDA and the cost of the materials needed to implement the program be the responsibility of the federal government. (2006)

## **BEES**

### **COLONY COLLAPSE (HONEYBEE)**

We support more research and legislation for research into the cause of the disappearance of honeybee colonies by disease, presently unidentified predators and other reasons and, further, that an indemnity program be established to reimburse bee farmers for loss of their colonies. (2007)

## **INCLUSION OF BEES IN NYS AGRICULTURAL MARKETS LAWS**

We encourage the amendment of New York State Agriculture and Markets Law – 25AA to include bees, use of bees, storage of bees, transport of bees and production of honey in the definition of farms, farm activities and agricultural products and that upon the inclusion of bees, use of bees, storage of bees, transport of bees and production of honey in New York State Agriculture and Markets Law – 25AA, that the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets create guidance documents regarding the keeping of bees. (2006)

## **CAREER RECRUITMENT**

### **NEW YORK STATE PROGRAMS**

We support proposed legislation to enact the Farmer Recruitment and Retention policies which would appropriate moneys and provisions for scholarships and programs. (2008)

### **AGRICULTURAL-RELATED CAREER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

We support legislation to enact agriculture-based recruitment and retention policies which would appropriate monies and provisions for scholarships and programs to encourage interest in going into agriculture-related careers. (2008)

## **CHEMICALS/MEDICINE**

### **USE OF BOVINE SOMOTATROPIN**

We oppose any ban on sale of dairy products from cows injected with bovine somatotropin (BST). (2005)

## **CRIMINAL ACTS**

### **AGRICULTURAL TRESPASS**

We support the increase of penalties for criminal acts of destruction of agricultural crops, products and property. (2009)

## **DAIRY/MILK**

### **MILK PRICING**

We strongly support that New York State funds shall be made available for the dairy assistance program to support funds made through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm service agency increase loan

guarantees to dairy farm operators; that milk income be paid on the Class 1 base floor price of \$18 (eighteen) dollars per hundredweight (cwt); that New York State Grange supports modifications to the federal milk marketing order program that accurately prices milk to reflect a pricing system that addresses the domestic and international milk markets and includes a supply management program that minimizes price volatility; and that the New York State Grange would support a milk supply management program endorsed by dairy producer groups. (2009)

### **TARIFFS ON MILK PROTEIN CONCENTRATES (MPC)**

We request Congress to pass legislation which would establish new tariff rate quotas for Milk Protein Concentrates (MPC). (2008)

### **NORTHEAST DAIRY COMPACT**

We support efforts by the Federal Government to reinstate the Northeast Dairy Compact to include New York State as a member, to aid farmers in getting an adequate price for their milk. (2008)

### **RESCIND BAN ON WHOLE MILK**

We propose a variety of dairy products, including whole and two percent milk, be offered by all New York State schools as part of their food service program. (2007)

### **MILK PRICING**

We request the members of the U.S. Congress to seriously review and address the Milk Price Support Programs for the protection of both the producer and consumer and to reflect current marketing of dairy products and milk production technologies. (2007, 2006)

## **ENERGY**

### **ETHANOL AS AN ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCE**

We support programs to set up ethanol plants and encourage our domestic farmers to grow corn and other products that could be used in the production of ethanol. (2006)

## **FARMER MARKETS**

### **FOOD MARKET FOOD STAMP COUPONS**

We favor returning farm market food stamp coupons to \$2.00 increments. (2009)

## **SIGNAGE FOR FARM MARKETS**

We urge change in 17 New York Code of Rules and Regulations Part 150 to allow farmers to place farm market signs on land parcels of the farm operation or farm woodland adjacent to state highways. (2008)

## **EXPANDED USE OF WIC FARMERS' MARKET COUPONS**

We encourage state lawmakers and agencies to change the guidelines to allow the use of WIC (Women, Infants & Children) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons at roadside stands and farmers' markets to increase access to fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables for WIC participants. (2007)

## **FINANCE/FUNDING**

### **REIMBURSEMENT TO COUNTY FAIRS**

We request that premium reimbursement at current levels to county fairs remain intact, thus sustaining an important aspect of rural living and long-standing American traditions provided by our county fairs. (2009)

### **AGRICULTURE DISASTER AREA REVOLVING FUND**

We support the establishment of an "Agriculture Disaster Area Revolving Fund" in New York State to provide farmers with low interest loans in time of major disaster. (2009)

### **EMERGENCY DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

We urge that emergency disaster assistance be provided to farmers and ranchers to cover crop, livestock and property losses. This assistance must cover all natural disasters in 2001, 2002, and 2003. Funding must be "emergency" and not cut farm bill spending. (2008)

### **FUNDING SUPPORT FOR NYS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUNDS**

We urge continued appropriation of Environmental Protection funds for conservation projects. (2007)

### **MONEY FOR STEWARDSHIP OF STATE LANDS**

We request that stewardship remains a line item in the New York State Budget, further that New York State needs to abide by the current laws that were enacted to provide adequate funding for stewardship of New York State owned lands. (2007)

## **AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

We urge the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to establish permanent, consistent funding for technical programming statewide, and request the State Legislature to continue funding the New York State Agriculture Environmental Management Program. (2007)

### **HISTORIC BARN PRESERVATION**

We urge continued funding for Historic Barn Preservation in the future. (2006)

## **FOOD/FOOD SAFETY**

### **GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD PRODUCTS**

We oppose legislation requiring the labeling of any and all genetically engineered food products for consumers. (2007)

### **INCENTIVE FOR SCHOOLS IN USE OF NYS PRODUCTS**

We support that New York State reimburse school districts an extra five cents on every meal in exchange for using New York State produce in school nutrition programs. (2007)

### **HOMELAND SECURITY FOR AGRICULTURE**

We support the office of Homeland Security in their efforts to investigate, monitor, develop, and implement plans for the prevention of and/or protection from acts of terrorism and destruction against agricultural producers, facilities of agricultural research, and major food processing and distribution centers. (2007)

### **LONG TERM EFFECTS OF ROUNDUP**

We urge Congress and the Department of Agriculture to further investigate the long-term effects of Glyphosate (Roundup) and the long-term effects of genetically altered seeds that are resistive to Glyphosate on the food chain. (2007)

### **MILK VENDING MACHINES**

We support and encourage the installation of milk vending machines in all public and private schools in the State of New York. (2007)

### **COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING**

We support more aggressive enforcement of Country of Origin Labeling. (2008)

We urge Congress to provide funding for implementation of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). (2007)

We support the addition of Country of Origin Labeling for dairy products to be included in the farm bill. (2006)

### **USDA REGULATIONS/FOOD RECALLS**

We support changing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations regarding food recalls that will: (1) make it mandatory to inform the public and local health officials of the recall of tainted food products, who the manufacturer/processor is and where the food products have been distributed. (2) require the USDA website to be more user-friendly so this information can be easily obtained by the general public. (3) require all recalls of tainted food products be made mandatory, not voluntary, by the manufacturer/processor. (2005)

### **MEAT PROCESSING PLANT INSPECTIONS**

We oppose any cutbacks in the federal daily inspections of meat processing plants, further that we oppose self-inspection of meat processing plants. (2005)

## **GOVERNMENT/ REGULATORY AGENCIES**

### **LEMON LAW FOR FARM MACHINERY**

We support “lemon laws” for farm machinery, similar to current laws for motor vehicles. (2009)

### **OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING DEVICES**

We recommend that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation eliminate all time frames for the use of outdoor wood-burning devices from the proposed new regulations. (2008)

### **COUNTY FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

We urge that NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Law 25-AA be amended to allow county governments to appoint designees with voting rights to represent the soil and water conservation district’s board of directors, the county planning department, and the department of real property services. (2008)

### **COMMODITIES TITLE OF 2007 FARM BILL**

We support the following listed items of the Commodities Title of 2007 Farm Bill:

1. Extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract Program until 2012.
2. Support of the price of cheddar cheese, butter and nonfat milk by government purchase of such products.
3. Re-establishment of the Dairy Forward Pricing Program.
4. Extension of the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP).

5. Requirement of importers and dairy producers in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico to participate in funding the Dairy Research and Promotion Program. (2007)

### **ANTITRUST MODERNIZATION COMMISSION**

We oppose the recommendations of the Antitrust Modernization Commission and continue to support current Grange policy on the Capper-Volstead Act. (2007)

### **PESTICIDE USAGE AND NOTIFICATION**

We oppose local regulation of pesticide usage and notification legislation. (2005)

We oppose legislation prohibiting the commercial and residential application of pesticides for pest control. (2005)

## **IMPORT/EXPORT**

### **IMPORTED APPLE CONCENTRATE**

We strongly urge the U.S. to charge a tariff on imported apple concentrate, further that the apple concentrate meet the same standards as apple concentrate from U.S. apple farmers. (2009)

### **IMPORTED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS**

We favor State and National legislation that would protect our farmers from imported farm products that are subsidized to the point that they unfairly compete with and do not meet the same safety standards that are required of our farm products. (2006)

### **FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE**

We ask the U.S. Government not to allow any importation of livestock to this country. (2006)

## **INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS**

### **IMMIGRATION REFORM (MIGRANT LABOR)**

We strongly urge the U.S. Congress to change the immigration policies and Immigration & Naturalization Services to modify the regulation to make it easier for farm employers to hire migrant labor without jeopardizing the security or domestic workforce of the U.S. (2008, 2006)

### **GUEST WORKER PROGRAM**

We urge Congress to amend the H2A Guest Worker Program for migrant workers which will assist the agricultural industry. (2008)

We recommend that a seasonal agricultural guest worker provision be included in immigration reform legislation. (2006)

### **MILK PROTEIN CONCENTRATE IMPORTS (MPC)**

We urge the reclassification of Milk Protein Concentrate as a dairy product by the World Trade Organization, the adoptions of tariff-rate quotas on MPC entering the country and the adoption of standards governing how MPC is used and an adequate inspection process to ensure compliance. (2007, 2005)

### **FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY**

We recommend convening a consortium of experts representing land grant universities, agri-business and farm organizations that will design pro-active federal farm policy which more accurately addresses current and future social, economic and environmental needs of United States farmers, agri-businesses, the food industry, the national and international consumers, and international trading partners. (2006)

### **IMPORTATION OF CATTLE/MEAT/MEAT PRODUCTS**

We are opposed to the importation of animals, meat, and meat products into the United States from any country having bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) until scientific data shows the supply is safe. (2005)

## **LAND/LAND USE**

### **GENERAL OBLIGATIONS LAW**

We support legislation that would amend the General Obligations law concerning limiting the liability of landowners and allowing the use of their land for recreational activities. (2009)

### **FARMLAND RETENTION**

We urge and support legislation that encourages farmland retention through programs of land use planning, zoning and transfer of development rights. (2008)

### **DEVELOPMENT OF CELLULOSIC ETHANOL AND USE OF DORMANT FARMLAND**

We urge that the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets support programs to encourage the use of current dormant farmland by putting them back into production, particularly for the use of crops that can be used for the production of bio-fuels. (2006)

### **LANDOWNERS DEER PERMIT**

We request the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation revise the qualifications to read: “The owner of 50 acres or more of land (need not be adjoining) contained

in one or more parcels located within the boundaries of the Wildlife Management Unit be eligible for antlerless permits.” (2006)

### **WETLAND REGULATIONS**

We are opposed to expanded regulation of wetlands less than 12.4 acres or any other wetland regulations that further restrict the rights of property owners. (2005)

## **LUMBER/TIMBER**

### **GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED LUMBER OPERATIONS**

We support legislation that would require private timber companies wishing to purchase trees in our national forest be made to assume the total bill of the harvesting plus a reasonable return to the treasury for the trees cut to cover the cost of maintaining these forests to marketability. (2009)

### **NATIONAL FOREST PROTECTION**

We urge National Grange to use its influence to allow best management practices in national forests. (2005)

## **RECYCLING**

### **BURNING OF AGRICULTURAL TRASH**

We reaffirm 2008 policy that opposes further restrictions on the burning of agricultural trash. (2009)

### **AGRICULTURAL PLASTICS**

We support funding be secured for the Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project (RAPP) through the Department of Agriculture and Markets Fund. (2009)

## **TAX INCENTIVES**

### **PROPOSED TAX ON COW FLATULENCE**

We oppose all regulations that would allow the Environmental Protection Agency to impose any cow flatulence emission tax on dairy and beef farmers, both presently and in the future, within the United States. (2009)

## **GROSS SALES REQUIREMENT**

We support a reduction of the qualifying gross sales requirements of farm products from \$10,000 to \$7,500 for an agricultural operation to qualify for a real property tax agricultural exemption. (2008)

## **UTILITY USE**

### **DELINQUENT ELECTRIC ACCOUNTS**

We encourage the Public Service Commission to enforce regulations prohibiting electric companies from shutting off power to active agricultural operations without at least a 10 day notice and an in-person contact with the individual named as account holder. (2008)

## **WATER**

### **CLEAN WATER RESTORATION ACT**

We urge defeat of the re-introduced Clean Water Restoration Act which would expand federal jurisdiction to every wet area in the nation, including ditches, rain collected low spots in farmers' fields, even ground water run-off. (2009)

### **HORIZONTAL DRILLING**

We support legislation that will protect the water supply of people who are surrounded by horizontal drilling of oil and natural gas. (2008)

### **MAINTAINING NAVIGABLE WATER LAW**

We support keeping the word "navigable" in the Clean Water Act. (2007)

We recommend the defeat of the Clean Water Restoration Act which would expand federal jurisdiction over every wet area in the nation, including ditches, rain collected low spots in farmers' fields and ground water run-off. (2007)

## **WATERWAYS**

### **GREAT LAKES WATER REMOVAL**

We oppose the removal or sale of water from the Great Lakes watershed. (2009)

## **ST. LAWRENCE RIVER LOW WATER LEVELS**

We urge the International Joint Commission to recognize the effect of low water levels in the St. Lawrence River on the economic condition of upstate New York and to do all within their power to alleviate the situation. (2009)

## **ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY EXPANSION**

We oppose the expansion of the St. Lawrence Seaway. (2007)

## **GREAT LAKES BASIN**

We recommend that State and National Granges monitor closely the proposals of the Great Lakes Basin and its possible adverse impact on the agricultural industry, and further to become involved in decision making as local and state governments address adoption and implementation of such regulations. (2005)

## **WILDLIFE/HUNTING**

### **INTRODUCTION OF ELK IN NYS**

We oppose the introduction of Elk into the wild of New York State. (2007)

### **WILDLIFE DAMAGE**

We oppose the passage of legislation which would limit farmers' ability to protect their crops from wildlife damage. (2006)

### **WHITE TAIL DEER MANAGEMENT**

We favor changes being made in the Big Game Hunting regulations to allow for Deer Management Permits to be used by archery hunters. (2006)

### **WILD ANIMAL RE-INTRODUCTION**

We urge legislation be enacted that would prohibit wild animals re-introduction without a referendum approval of area residents. (2006)

### **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

We support legislation which would legally allow people to defend themselves from an attack by a rattlesnake or any other animal without concern of retribution from government authorities. (2005)

## **WILD ANIMAL RELEASE**

We support legislation that requires Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to notify local residents of wild animal releases so they can be alerted to necessary safety awareness measures. (2005)

## **COYOTES**

We strongly urge the N.Y. Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to institute a program of control of coyotes to reduce their number to include regular year-round hunting and consideration of a statewide “bounty” on them and, further, assist and work closely with the DEC on this endeavor and also to help educate the public that a person has the right to shoot a coyote whether in or out of season if it is doing damage to their animals. (2007)