



AAW 2009 Position Statements

Agriculture Business & Economics

TAXATION

Capital Gains Tax on the Sale of Farmland

AAW supports broadening of the \$250,000/\$500,000 exemption available on the sale of a personal residence to apply to the sale of farmland.

FFARRM Accounts

AAW supports passage of the Fish, Farm and Ranch Risk Management Account concept, which would allow farmers and ranchers to set aside a percentage of income during high-income years to be taxed later during lower income years. American Agri-Women supports deferment of self-employment tax on that amount as well.

Health Insurance for Self-Employed Individuals

AAW applauds the acceleration of the deduction for health insurance for the self-employed up to 100%. However, AAW supports moving the deduction from page one of Form 1040 where it is deductible for federal income tax only, to schedules F or C, where it is deductible for self-employment tax as well.

Estate & Gift Tax

AAW is concerned that the popular move to eliminate the estate tax carries with it a return to carry-over basis.*

*** This would mean that farm heirs (as well as other heirs) would not get a stepped up basis for property they inherit, making property acquired via inheritance and later sold subject to very large capital gains taxes. While we do not object to the elimination of estate tax, we call for transparency in the ultimate product and a fair analysis of all related provisions. In lieu of total elimination, AAW supports an individual exemption of \$5 million to \$10 million, indexed for inflation.**

Long-Term Security and Retirement

AAW supports legislation to encourage individuals to provide themselves with a guaranteed stream of income for life. Specifically, AAW supports a proposal that would create a tax incentive for lifetime payouts from individual annuities. It would allow individuals to exclude from taxation 50% of income received from an individual lifetime annuity, up to \$20,000 annually.

Depreciation Recapture on Retirement

AAW supports a change in the depreciation recapture rules when farm and other business depreciable assets are sold on retirement or cessation of business. Currently the amount of depreciation taken on most assets is recaptured as ordinary income, thereby eliminating the benefit of a more favorable capital gains tax rate for most businesspersons who sell their business assets on retirement.

INSURANCE

Health Insurance, Prescription Drugs & Medicare

AAW supports legislation that allows associations to offer group health insurance plans to individual members and small businesses.

AAW supports the concept that citizens of the United States should have access to the best medical service available. We believe this is best delivered by private enterprise. Any legislation should reflect that view.

AAW respects and supports continued research.

AAW supports the coverage by health insurance and Medicare of the reasonable cost of outpatient drugs.

AAW supports the right of Americans to legally purchase medications from the most economical source.

AAW supports Medicare payments to rural health professionals and facilities at the same level as their urban counterparts.

AAW supports a proposed change in Medicare to include paying for nutrition counseling for those over age 65 and the disabled population who suffer from chronic conditions (i.e., high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes).

AAW supports a health care system:

- within which decisions for specific testing and hospital stays should be determined by medical professionals
- that continues to develop and to use paraprofessional programs in rural communities as well as programs to encourage doctors and nurses to locate in rural areas
- that increase competition in the form of voluntary purchasing alliances to help smaller employers and individuals buy insurance at a reasonable rate rather than in the form of government-mandated bureaucracies
- that employers with temporary or part-time employees will be exempt from legislation that would require them to pay for health care coverage

Long-Term Care Security

AAW supports continuation of government assistance in caring for the elderly who are truly without resources.

At the same time, AAW supports legislation to encourage individuals to provide themselves with a guaranteed stream of income for life.

AAW supports an optional national regulator or Optional Federal Charter (OFC) for insurers that would create a uniform, consistent system that would remove barriers to consumer choice and offer consumers the same protections nationwide. For more than 100 years, insurance has been regulated by the states, with each state having its own unique regulatory system. It is a cumbersome patchwork of laws and regulations characterized by delays and expenses that ultimately disadvantage consumers. Further, consumer safeguards vary and products available in one state may not be available in another.

Crop Insurance

AAW supports reforms to the crop insurance program to:

- provide in all regions of the country affordably priced, adequate coverage that is actuarially sound and voluntary
- exempt the benefits of crop insurance from the gross income test

- require participation in crop insurance for eligibility in government crop disaster programs

AAW supports requiring crop insurance for only crop disaster programs and not for other federal agriculture programs. Participants should have the option to not participate in the crop insurance program and thus not be eligible to collect insurance or government disaster payments.

AAW supports the strict enforcement of crop insurance regulations with regard to abuse of the program. Producers should be held to the highest standards. Those who commit crop insurance fraud should be held accountable and fined at the maximum level.

LEGAL CONCERNS

AAW supports the legislative process for determining major agricultural policy.

AAW strongly opposes any federal agency expanding their regulatory authority without going through the legislative process.

AAW opposes any effort to amend and/or abolish the existing rules of the Electoral College. We oppose any compact or entity circumventing the Electoral College as it currently exists.

Agricultural Labor

AAW believes labor-intensive agriculture in the U.S., especially fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, greenhouse and nursery, dairy and Christmas trees, could face a dire labor crisis. Estimates of 50-70% of the workforce is feared to lack legal status, and the costly and difficult H-2A program provides less than 3% of the workforce. Food is a strategic resource for the United States, and the stability of our domestically produced food supply and other agricultural industries is at risk.

AAW supports a guest worker program with a realistic admissions level that will be a legal channel for workers to enter the country.

AAW supports a workable employment verification system where workers can be verified by one card issued by one government agency.

AAW supports a legal channel for the experienced workforce that is feeding America and sustaining our industries.

AAW supports strong border security.

AAW supports reform of the H-2A program which is covered in the AgJOBS legislation (Agricultural Jobs, Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act, H.R.371 [2008]).

AAW believes that secret ballot should be the way for workers to vote for union representation.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES

International Trade Negotiation and Policy

AAW supports the strict implementation of all international trading rules to prevent unfair practices by competing nations and to assure unrestricted access to domestic and world markets. Furthermore, we believe that all trade agreements should be continually evaluated.

AAW supports equivalent sanitary and phytosanitary regulations as part of any free trade agreement.

AAW believes that quality standards for imported products should meet the same standards required for U.S. products. Imported foods should meet the same grading and safety standards as domestic products.

AAW opposes the use of false trade barriers, such as requiring the labeling of biotech products, in trade negotiations and policy development.

AAW supports payment of the technology fee on biotech seed by all who use the seed—not just those in the United States. The requirement that this additional fee be paid on all biotech seed planted in the U.S. is a distinct trade disadvantage to U.S. farmers by increasing their cost of production.

AAW supports cooperative efforts for international market development and promotion programs.

Border and Port Inspections

AAW supports USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service having the responsibility for border and port inspections with the appropriate increase in funding. We believe that inspection of our food supply at the ports of entry should be increased.

Trade Promotion Authority

AAW supports Presidential Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), with the restriction that non-trade issues such as labor and the environment may not be included, nor should they be considered as side agreements.

Sanction Reform

AAW believes that unilateral sanctions have not proven to be an effective means to further foreign policy goals and are disruptive to international food trade.

International Organizations and Trade Agreements

AAW recognizes the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the primary international forum for world trade.

AAW encourages the U.S. Trade Representative and/or the WTO to review the developing nation status definition.

AAW supports further liberalization of trade in agricultural products, which can be achieved through the WTO.

AAW supports balanced, fair international trade agreements that open international markets to U.S. agricultural products, provide for minimal production distorting supports and eliminate export subsidies and single desk exporters.

DOMESTIC TRADE ISSUES

Transportation

AAW believes that all commercial vehicles operating within U.S. borders must meet uniform safety standards.

AAW supports reform of the Jones Act-Merchants Marine Act of 1920* so that shipping costs can be competitive for the U.S. producer.

*** The Jones Act currently places severe restriction on U.S. businesses and agriculture by requiring that merchandise being transported in part or in entirety by water between U.S. points—either directly or via foreign ports—must travel in U.S. built, U.S. manned, and U.S. citizen-owned vessels. No other U.S. industry or its customers are bound by such restrictions.**

Consumers are paying to protect U.S. water-borne vessels from international competition in the domestic maritime market.

The U.S. (Jones Act) fleet does not have enough qualified carriers. Farmers in the southeast can purchase Canadian grain shipped through the same route. Not a single U.S. coastal freighter larger than 1,000 ton runs along the east coast. Hawaiian beef producers often choose to have their beef processed in Canada because of the lack of cattle carriers and the prohibitive cost to airfreight cattle to the U.S. mainland. It is cheaper to send cattle to the mainland by air than by water because there are no qualified livestock carriers in the Jones Act fleet.

Labeling

AAW supports mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on all imported agricultural and aquacultural products at the final point of sale to consumers. Ideally, this would include restaurants. The country of origin should be clearly stated and large enough to be easily identified by the consumer. Imported products should meet the same grading, phytosanitary and production standards as domestic products.

Market Consolidation

AAW supports strong congressional oversight of market consolidation. AAW believes that retail consolidation restricts trade and decreases market access for small farmers.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AAW urges family farmers to investigate agri-tourism and alternative crops, which might add profit to the farming operation.

Telecommunications

AAW supports a full range of ownership of telecommunications infrastructure including entrepreneurs, large corporations, municipalities, and other units of local government.

Rural Hospitals

AAW supports continued appropriation of federal funds to keep rural hospitals operational and modern.

GLOBAL ISSUES

AAW recognizes the need for an international forum for countries to discuss their differences and cooperate on problems of common concern.

AAW opposes the U.S. government granting any authority to the United Nations regarding the use or management of any federal, state, or private properties of the United States.

AAW opposes the U.S. government granting any taxing authority to the United Nations.

AAW supports the concept that the U.S., not the U.N., establish the criteria to be met by developing nations prior to receiving U.S. food aid. We support giving "food" in food aid rather than dollars. We recognize that the U.S. needs to provide a steady level of food aid, every year, on which the international humanitarian community can rely. At a minimum, food donations should total at least 6 million metric tons annually.

AAW opposes the reauthorization of any designated biosphere reserves within the U.S. or its holdings and any new designation of reserves in the future.

AAW opposes the use of U.S. land holdings for barter of U.S. debts to foreign nations. U.S. lands are owned by people of the United States of America and were never intended to use for barter. Every effort should be made to reinstate those holdings that have been transferred.

Commodities

A domestic food, fuel, and fiber supply must be the basis of our national security.

AAW recognizes that U.S. farmers and ranchers continue to provide a safe and abundant food supply in a healthy environment.

The future well being of the world depends upon modern, progressive production capabilities and practices of U.S. agriculture.

AAW supports legislation that will enhance domestic and international market growth and also supports legislation that exempts food from trade embargoes.

In the event of a natural disaster, AAW supports timely government assistance to affected agricultural producers.

AAW supports an efficient and modern transportation infrastructure, which enables U.S. farmers' and ranchers' access to domestic and world markets. The general lack of transportation infrastructure maintenance, including locks and dams, and railroad monopolies, put all U.S. agriculture and the world food supply in jeopardy.

DAIRY AND OTHER LIVESTOCK

AAW believes that federal orders best serve U.S. dairy policy, dairy producers, handlers and consumers when structured and administered with uniform and equitable classified pricing regulations, based on product utilization and market returns, regardless of geographic location.

AAW recognizes that increased global demand for meat, milk and eggs compels agriculture to use the latest technological tools.

AAW supports availability of new products to safeguard the health of animals.

AAW supports appropriate agricultural policies and adequate funding in agricultural research and extension through the Agricultural Research Service and the Cooperative Extension Service to ensure the necessary increases in productivity of food producing animals.

AAW supports an enhanced infectious disease monitoring and testing program of imported and domestic animals and meat in order to maintain consumer confidence and market stability.

AAW opposes announcements of suspect cases of infectious zoonotic diseases.

AAW supports announcements of confirmed cases of infectious and zoonotic diseases.

AAW supports interstate shipment of meat from state-inspected processing plants where state regulations are equal to or exceed federal regulations.

AAW urges the USDA to work with state and federal animal health officials to identify all animals imported into the United States.

AAW recommends that any federally mandated surveillance and food safety programs be accompanied with adequate federal funding.

AAW supports research and education into standards of care that ensure animal welfare and profitable ways to raise livestock set by marketing demands. This should require the use of peer-reviewed research-based science.

AAW supports mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) to promote consumption of U.S. products.

AAW urges Congress to promote policy and regulations that encourage flexibility by the livestock industry to make responsible management decisions on breeding, disease surveillance, marketing, environmental conditions, and other issues that affect the livestock industry and the welfare of animals.

AAW supports a voluntary national premises registration and animal identification program for effective track and trace, animal health, and public confidence in the U.S. food supply.

AAW believes there is a need to further develop the national animal identification system to be cost-effective to producers.

AAW supports legislation to clarify that Congress did not intend to regulate manure under the Comprehensive Environmental Recovery Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) or the Environmental Protection and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), known as Superfund laws.

GRAINS

AAW supports and promotes alternative uses of all grain and related byproducts produced in the United States. We support a national energy policy that includes a renewable fuels standard (RFS) for all transportation fuels and less dependence upon foreign oil. We support the use of existing and new seed technology for food, feed and fiber to advance a higher economic benefit and to assure an abundant and secure domestic and global food supply.

AAW encourages a coalition of feed, grain, and livestock organizations to assure a unified voice for animal agriculture.

AAW supports the 2008 Farm Bill as is.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

AAW commends the U.S. Department of Agriculture for increasing fruits and vegetable consumption in federal food programs. We encourage the expansion of these federal food programs throughout the U.S. Consumption of fresh produce provides tremendous health and economic benefit to both consumers and growers.

SPECIALTY CROPS

AAW supports a competitive specialty crop industry, which includes edible and non-edible crops.

U.S. specialty crop growers believe that there are numerous areas of federal agriculture policy that must be improved to increase the competitiveness and efficiency of specialty crop producers.

AAW supports the U.S. Trade Representative establishing a position for specialty crop trade matters in the agricultural office.

LANDSCAPING, NURSERIES, GREENHOUSES

AAW supports the development of industry-driven, science-based, voluntary, Best-Management Practices (BMPs) as well as associated cost-share programs and other incentives to assist nurseries in meeting water quality standards and other environmental goals.

AAW supports continued research and development of biological, physical, cultural and chemical tools necessary for nursery growers and landscape maintenance professionals to incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPMs) strategies into their overall management regimens.

AAW insists that the scientific foundation and biological integrity of Quarantine-37 must never be compromised. It is a scientifically sound, biologically based barrier designed to minimize the introduction of new, damaging, exotic pests and diseases into the U.S.

POLLINATORS

AAW supports rebuilding viable and vibrant pollinator communities across all lands to improve resiliency and functional redundancy in pollinator populations and to improve long-term profitability of agriculture. Pollinators are vital to production agriculture. Most fruit, vegetable, forage and seed crops plus crops that provide fiber, drugs and fuel require the pollination services provided by managed and native or "wild" pollinators.

AAW supports promoting pollinators through further revisions to USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) field office technical guides and conservation practices.

NEW CROPS/NEW USES

AAW supports research efforts into the utilization of alternate/new crops for new commercial food, fiber, and energy uses.

AAW supports funding of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to support research on plant-based feeds necessary to develop the regulatory structure for an offshore aquaculture industry in the U.S.

Natural Resources

AAW believes in the benefits of multiple uses of natural resources.

AAW recommends policies that promote and ensure abundant, renewable natural resources and a healthy, productive environment.

AAW believes that for national security, priority must be restored to utilize our natural resources to produce basic benefits of food, fiber, shelter, and fuel for our country.

AAW believes that government agencies that are using the power of decision-making to affect natural resource industries need to be held accountable for their decisions. There should be:

- specific timetables
- timely efficiency reports
- analysis of public and private costs of implementation
- balancing of harms and benefits
- analysis of the effect of no-management actions

Public Land & Animal Resource Management

AAW expects government to comply with the same standards imposed on citizens and businesses regarding the management of natural resources and wildlife.

AAW supports continuation of the Federal Animal Damage Control program as a priority responsibility of agencies involved in wildlife management to protect private and public property.

AAW supports active, responsible management of wildlife.

Wildlife overpopulation, overgrazing, polluted streams, passing of disease from infected animals and extensive crop damages are but a few intolerable consequences of wildlife mismanagement.

LAND USE

AAW supports the preservation of our nation's sovereignty and our Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

AAW believes that good stewardship of our natural resources is best assured by those who have made both financial and labor investments to become owners and caretakers of their land.*

*** Even though local, state and federal governments own more than 40% of the land in the United States, some groups seek additional purchases of private property by, or through, the government. The continued purchase and taking of private property by the government or government funded organizations, using government funds, erode the very foundation on which this country, its principles, freedoms, economy and the health and productivity of its natural resources are based.**

AAW recognizes that a family farm or ranch is a form of business enterprise in which the entrepreneurial decisions are made by individuals engaged in the production of food, feed, fiber, fuel, forest products and/or flora for profit, which provides a major source of income and capital for investment.

AAW opposes the elimination of productive agriculture lands to constructed artificial wetland.*

*** For example, In Illinois a large-scale constructed artificial wetland is being used to naturally treat the wastewater from the Chicago Sanitary District. It will take 200,000 acres of wetlands to treat the Chicago Sanitary District's wastewater. The EPA'S Science Advisory Board Hypoxia Panel has stated it will take 5 million acres of wetlands in the dead zone of the Gulf Hypoxia.**

AAW opposes any authority given to the United Nations or foreign governments regarding the use or management of any federal, state or private properties within the boundaries of the U.S. and its holdings.

AAW opposes the designation of Scenic Byways, flyways, waterways or any other designations and the resulting restrictions on private lands in the U.S.

Public Lands

AAW supports access to public lands for multiple uses.

Multiple uses include but are not limited to agriculture, grazing, mining, drilling, forestry, habitat and recreation.

AAW supports a policy of no net loss of taxable private property.

AAW opposes preferential treatment to sellers or buyers of private land through tax incentives or other measures to nonprofit entities.

AAW supports efforts to prevent entities from setting up "shell" foundations in order to obtain funds on conservation payments.

AAW supports restricting and monitoring the conditions by which private non-profit groups can purchase land with the intent to sell or transfer ownership of that land to the government.

The intent by government to acquire or take the use of land, or the land itself, should be an open process and readily available to public review.

AAW expects Congress to fully appropriate and to disperse Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) to local governments in a timely matter, as required by law.

AAW opposes the designation of additional wilderness areas.*

* **Wilderness areas are wild lands with special "legal" protections granted by the U.S. Congress that cannot be changed. They cannot be managed to save species, habitat or old growth forests, or to suppress fire. Natural forces prevail. In 1964, when the Wilderness Act was passed, there were 9.1 million acres set aside in 13 states (54 areas). In 2007 there are almost 107.5 million acres in 44 states and Puerto Rico (702 areas). Numbers from www.wilderness.net**

The National Wilderness Preservation System currently contains 704 wilderness areas comprising 107,361,680 acres. The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 signed by President Obama 03/30/09 designates 51 new wilderness areas + additional acreage to 26 existing areas for a total of 2,091,955 acres additional acres to the wilderness system.

Private Property Rights

AAW supports legislation that reinforces our citizens' constitutional property rights and requires just and complete compensation for the taking of private property.

AAW strongly supports legislation that considers "takings" as the devaluation of land by:

- regulatory action
- activities that negatively impact adjacent land
- activities that impact landowner's rights in any way

AAW contends that water is property [the Hage vs. United States Takings case, January 26, 2004]. Any reallocation of the water permitted for private use by government is a taking. Government should fairly compensate the owners of privately held water when the public deems a necessary beneficial use of that water.

AAW strongly supports private property owners and the sovereignty of states above the federal government regarding allocations of water within their borders.

AAW urges Congress to take no action that would impair state authority in allocating water rights and use of the legal rights of water right owners.

Eminent Domain

Eminent domain should not be used for the purchase of property from a private owner to transfer to another private or commercial owner. When property is taken, the owner must be fully compensated at fair market value for property, expenses and lost income.

AAW opposes the use of eminent domain for economic development and additional tax revenue accruing from such development.

AAW strongly opposes the taking of private property by postings on the Internet only.

Government agencies considering the acquisition of properties by eminent domain should at a minimum send a certified letter with return receipt requested to the property owner of record on the county tax rolls, notifying him of the open public meeting called to decide the issue, at least 90 days prior to the meeting, and publish a newspaper legal notice.

Before exercising eminent domain, every effort should be made to use existing public land.

AAW opposes the taking of private property by eminent domain to construct the planned NAFTA transportation corridor that will reach from Mexico to Canada.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Our nation's security depends upon our military and domestic food and energy supply and must therefore take precedence over the regulations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

AAW supports the value of sustaining human life and safety above any other species whether endangered, threatened or not listed.

Funding for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) needs to be discontinued until such time as the Act is re-authorized and the means for funding re-evaluated.

AAW supports the following:

- require the use of sound, verifiable, research-based science giving equal weight to historical data of the land before a listing is approved
- eliminate subjective biological units (sub-species, populations, stocks) from ESA action and pursue recovery of only significant species
- require that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Critical Habitat designations be completed before restrictive regulatory action is taken. This should require concurrent social, economic and environmental cost/benefit analyses and compensatory adjustments for takings deemed necessary for species protection
- ensure protection for property owners from regulatory takings by local, state and national agencies. If property is taken, owner must be fully compensated for loss of property at fair market value, for loss of income and expenses
- allow a state or private property owner who is sued for an alleged ESA violation to continue with existing farming, logging, fishing or mining practices until the suit is resolved
- require feasible recovery plans and selection of recovery measures that are most cost effective and have the least negative social and economic impact
- review and evaluate recovery plans every five years for accountability

- allow for administrative appeal of qualified major decisions and/or judicial review by qualified affected parties
- exclude specie from consideration as endangered or threatened, or de-list it, if it is abundant in any location
- acknowledge “extinction” as a natural process of evolution

Only native species should be considered for endangered species status (reference definition of native species).

Invasive Species

AAW does not view all non-native species as invasive, nuisance, noxious, or harmful. It is well known that migratory flyways can and do change. Weather, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes can and do cause variations to migration. Oceanic currents can and do cause variations to historic ranges of species. These and other acts of nature cause relocation of species. Therefore the phrase, “invasive species” needs to be defined as a specific set of scientific criteria.

AAW believes this distinction needs to be made clear in open debate.

“Invasive species” means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Native species” means, with respect to a particular ecosystem, a species that, other than as a result of an introduction, historically occurred or currently occurs in that ecosystem.

FORESTRY & TIMBER

Our nation has more forested acres and trees today than a hundred years ago. Natural and renewable, trees offer many benefits to our communities, nation, and world. Trees can provide goods, recreation, and wildlife habitats. They clean and cool the air we breathe and protect our water and fisheries.

Fifty-one percent of our nation’s forests are privately owned and more than one-third of these acres are part of a farm, an important part of the rural landscape.

AAW urges the Farm Bill to offer cost sharing towards an environmental quality incentives; tax incentives for developing renewable energy sources; habitats; and/or water improvements.

AAW urges the expansion of the domestic forest products market to encourage private forest owners to keep and manage their forest. We lose a million acres annually to development.

Our public national forests are sick and dying. Today’s public forests are growing 10 to 100 times more trees per acre than the forested lands at the time Native Americans managed them by fire. The overcrowded forests result in insect damage, disease, and the loss of groundwater. These unhealthy conditions make the forests vulnerable to fire.

Forest fires are more frequent, bigger in size, and catastrophic in nature. Forest fire costs do not reflect the cost of the burned trees, watershed damages, homes, ranches, wildlife, or livestock that are lost. Fire costs now account for nearly 50% of the annual Forest Service budget. The most devastating wildfires, which are only 1% of all wildfires, consume 95% of all the burned acres and 85% of all the suppression costs. Creating a separate fund would allow these extraordinary emergency fires to be treated the same way as other natural disasters.

AAW urges Congress to support the Forest Service in implementing their National Forest Plans.

Actively managed forests are healthy forests and could play an important role in our climate’s change. A healthy tree can

absorb 10 pounds of carbon in a year from the atmosphere. The best sequesters of carbon are healthy growing trees. Old and decaying trees release carbon back into the atmosphere and become part of the carbon problem. Timber owners are able to market carbon credits. The removal of woody biomass and additional timber harvest would make materials available to be used for generating electricity, bio-diesel, bio-ethanol, or other heavy fuel oils and aid in carbon sequestration.

AAW urges Congress to release to multiple uses acres that do not qualify for wilderness and settle the 40-year-old issue of roadless designation.

AAW opposes the sale of national forest lands to fund the purchase of more federal lands.

AAW urges Congress to amend the Equal Access to Justice Act. Requiring a significant bond based on losses incurred by delays, limiting amounts awarded and requiring plaintiffs to pay government’s attorneys’ fees if they lose would deter frivolous lawsuits.

WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Civil Works

AAW supports the maintenance and continued development of dams, levees, canals and other engineered facilities that provide multiple benefits to people and nature.

AAW urges Congress to immediately reaffirm the initial, established purpose of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The purposes of flood control, navigation and irrigation projects have served both the government and the economic development efforts of this country.

AAW supports the funding and construction of new 1200-foot locks and maintenance of the existing 600-foot locks for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System.

AAW supports the implementation of a plan for systemic flood protection for the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

AAW opposes the use of Inland Waterways and Harbor Maintenance trust funds for operations and maintenance.

Trust funds should fund only new construction as intended when authorized. Flood control, irrigation, energy production and transportation should remain as primary purposes for public water storage and management investments. Fish and wildlife “protections” and other environmental concerns should be added using research based to ensure that social-economic costs are justifiable with devaluation and/or harm to individuals, communities, or states being fully compensated.

AAW urges Congress to disallow these immense public investments, such as dams, to be arbitrarily and capriciously destroyed. Prior to any purposeful alteration or destruction of these public investments or their uses, the government should show research-based scientific and economic proof that this action is vital to national security and necessary for benefit to humans as well as to the environment, as required under the original intent of the authority of the Corps of Engineers.

AAW advocates policies that promote abundance of water resources.

Navigable Waters

AAW supports retaining the word “navigable” in the Clean Water Act.

Navigable waters—waters that provide a channel of continuous flow for commerce and transportation of people and goods

Water Contracts, Water Rights, Ownership

AAW urges Congress to honor its contractual obligations to agricultural water users throughout the west who rely on federally constructed water projects for irrigation supplies. Full contract supplies are essential to maintain the West's productive farmland, which helps feed and clothe our nation and the world.

AAW opposes land retirement as a means of relieving the U.S. government's contractual obligations to provide water and/or drainage service to the West.

AAW opposes foreign ownership of water and water treatment and distribution utilities.

AAW opposes federal purchase of privately held water rights in cases where the federal government would then hold the water right.

AAW supports a prominent role of agriculture in determining water allocation due to the economic and social necessity of producing enough food, fiber, and fuel to accommodate the domestic population and to build the economy by marketing value added and surplus commodity products.

Wetlands

AAW opposes a national policy of avoiding impacts to wetlands, versus previous policy of minimizing impacts to wetlands.

AAW opposes use of public funds to support easements or buyouts to non-profit groups for large-scale wetland restoration that removes agricultural land from local tax rolls and other local economic activity.

AAW supports the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not have jurisdiction over wetlands that are not adjacent to navigable waters.

WATER QUALITY

Livestock

AAW opposes efforts to regulate livestock manure as hazardous waste under Comprehensive Environment Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) or other environmental laws.

Non-Point Source

AAW supports a national water quality policy on nonpoint source pollution that gives states the control to develop and manage water quality programs specific to the states' own watershed issues.

Programs under the Clean Water Act should promote the use of voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) by rural landowners, agricultural producers and urban natural resources users.

Given flexibility within state programs, local watershed stakeholder committees can develop and implement Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) designed to incorporate BMPs and monitoring as key components to the protection of water resources and the prevention of future impairments.

AAW supports revising water quality standards based on real risk to human health as determined by research-based scientific methods.

Data and Monitoring

AAW strongly promotes funding the monitoring of targeted waterways and the collection of data for accurate decision-making in the allocation of state resources for water protection programs.

AAW expects the federal and state elected officials and agency staff decision-makers to use credible, current records on historical data to establish reasonable and attainable year-round water temperature standards for rivers and streams.

AAW supports cost/benefit analysis and adequate funding including risk assessments before state and federal regulations are imposed on communities.

AAW supports the U.S. EPA assisting states in establishing a designated use classification system for state surface waters.

*** A designated system would allow for water quality standards to be applied by type of stream. For example, an agricultural irrigation or drainage ditch should not be required to meet the same standard as a pristine stream.**

AAW objects to nutrient trading proposals, projects, or experiments that are based on questionable science and unsustainable economics. Government resources should only fund such projects that do not cause adverse effects on adjacent lands, river systems, and communities.

ENERGY

A well-developed diverse domestic energy supply is critical to national security.

AAW supports the 25 x '25 Initiative of having 25% of the U.S. renewable energy sources being produced by farms, ranches, and forests by the year 2025.

AAW supports the use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol, biodiesel, wind energy, and biomass fuels, because:

- alternative fuels are an abundant renewable resource
- alternative fuels are important to our nation's energy security
- alternative fuels are environmentally friendly.

Agriculture production and distribution is dependent on the oil industry.

AAW supports development of domestic oil, coal, and natural gas supplies on public and private land as well as offshore, as applicable.

AAW supports the creation of new refineries and the continuous updating of existing refineries.

AAW supports continued research of nuclear energy and development of new plants.

Public Understanding & Awareness

ANIMAL WELFARE

AAW supports the responsible treatment of animals and livestock industry participation in the development of any new policy to regulate treatment practices.

AAW respectfully asks legislators (when they are approached by animal rights representatives to carry bills pertaining to animal health) to talk with actual livestock producers about the legislation in order to learn why producers use these tools for the well being of their animals.

AAW supports the responsible use of animals in research.

AAW supports legislation establishing strong federal criminal penalties and civil remedies for violent, threatening, obstructive, and destructive conduct that is intended to injure, intimidate, or interfere with animal enterprises and research.

AAW supports legislation that establishes assistance for security programs at research facilities.

AAW supports the right of farmers to protect their records from public scrutiny.

AAW supports the legalization of horse slaughter plants to guarantee the humane and environmentally-sensitive disposition of aged and infirm horses in the U.S.

AAW supports the sale, possession and humane transportation of horses for processing across state and international borders.

AAW supports the use of standardized best management practices in livestock carcass disposal.

GLOBAL ISSUES

AAW asserts that any new U.S. climate change policy must deliver environmental progress without harming the economy or U.S. food production.

CLEAN AIR

AAW supports a clean air standard providing an agricultural exemption for dust particulate matter generated as a result of agricultural activities. Any definition including dust as a contaminant must exempt production agriculture.

AAW supports research efforts to identify agriculture's role in carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration, the process by which carbon gases are captured and stored, presents potential technological solutions to the build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

CROP PROTECTION

Pesticide Application and Runoff

AAW strongly urges the rehearing of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling vacating the USEPA regulation waiving pesticide application on waterways and contiguous fields as a pollutant. This ruling brings producers under Clean Water Act permits a position opposed by AAW.

Methyl Bromide

AAW supports the continued use of methyl bromide in the U.S. through the year 2010 and beyond, to provide fairness and equity with other nations in the world. Sound science to date shows that methyl bromide is neither a carcinogen nor a reproductive toxicant. Elimination of this tool would impose unnecessary severe economic impact on the U.S. farmer. We support research for cost effective alternatives to methyl bromide.

Phosphine Fumigation and Food Quality Protection Act Resolution

AAW urges Congress to direct EPA to cease implementation of new restrictions for aluminum/ magnesium phosphine fumigants.

Anhydrous Ammonia Fertilizer

AAW supports the chemical industry's anti-methamphetamine task force activities regarding the prevention of the use of anhydrous ammonia for illegal purposes.

Chemical Registration

AAW urges Congress to continue oversight of EPA in its review of Section 18, Section 24C and Crisis Exemption requests by the states, manufacturers and third parties.

AAW supports the counterpart regulations jointly developed by EPA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to streamline the Federal Insecticide Fungicide, & Rodenticide (FIFRA) regulatory process and harmonize it with the requirements of the ESA. The new program ensures that regulatory protections are in place for threatened species and ensures timely and continued access to safe and necessary pest management tools.

FOOD SAFETY

AAW supports a strong policy that requires the proper handling, preparation, and processing of all consumer food products to minimize the risk of bacterial contamination.

AAW supports industry-coordinated federal standards to protect the US food supply while maintaining consumer confidence in the safety of American agricultural products.

AAW strongly supports the Food & Drug Administration's decision to allow the irradiation of food products and education on how to minimize food-borne pathogens.

AAW supports the implementation of animal health emergency management and eradication programs, traceability of all food products, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), continued worldwide surveillance activities, monitoring of the status of foreign and domestic animal diseases, and inspections at the border to maintain a safe and abundant food supply for the American people and the world population.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

AAW supports continued research and development of tools and techniques that would support the advancement of agricultural production and processes in the United States for the industry and the consumer.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

AAW supports the development and incorporation of biotechnology in agricultural research and production. Biotechnology gives greater flexibility to agricultural producers in making responsible management decisions by reducing input costs, increasing crop yields, promoting integrated pest management, and providing environmental protections to our natural resources.

AAW supports the coordinated framework and extensive testing procedures of biotechnological products by the U.S. regulatory agencies (EPA, FDA, and USDA).

AAW firmly believes it is unnecessary, confusing and costly to the consumer to label biotechnological products or processes.

AAW believes that any biosafety protocol that is implemented should be based on risk assessments and research-based science.

AAW condemns the theft or destruction of agricultural research and intellectual property. Research has tremendous benefits to the farmer and the consumer. Genetically-enhanced products have the capability of improving human health, and solving world environmental and nutritional problems.

TERRORISM

AAW condemns all forms of terrorism. As providers of this nation's food and fiber supply, we recognize the need to increase our vigilance to protect the production of agriculture products (food, feed, fuel, fiber and flora and the inputs required for production).

AAW supports efforts to educate producers about ways to safeguard our nation's food and fiber supply and agricultural inputs from acts of terror.

Education

AAW believes in an educated public. Furthermore, agricultural education and education about our nation's food and fiber system should be based on factual information and research based science. We encourage agriculturalists to work cooperatively on common issues through education.

AAW supports the intent of the Carl D. Perkins Act with increased funding for vocational (career and technical) agriculture education.

AAW supports a national Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program with continued funding and support for a national director.