

From the Grassroots to the Halls of

Congress...Throughout the year, AAW members are busy working at the local and state levels. They are well-known to their local and state lawmakers and regulatory officials. They are also frequently called upon to be in contact with their U.S. Representatives and Senators and generally know them personally, as well as members of their staffs.



Fly-In...For over 20 years, AAW has held a “Fly-In” to Washington, D.C. in June, a time when members converge in the nation’s capitol for meetings not only with their Congressional Delegations, but also with key agency officials at the Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, and Environmental Protection Agency. AAW members use this time to also make contacts and renew relationships with DC-based association staff, agribusiness representatives and international agricultural attaches. An annual congressional reception gives members the opportunity to visit with these friends of AAW as well as congressional members and staff from throughout the country.

AAW policy positions....AAW adopts policy on a wide range of issues at the Mid-Year Board of Directors meeting. Quite simply put - there is not other agricultural organization that takes a position on as wide a range of issues as American Agri-Women. This is a credit to our diverse membership, representing a wide range of commodities.

Hallmarks of the policy positions have been support for agriculture as a whole industry; for the use of science and technology, rather than emotion; in support of private property rights; and support for the free market system.

This document then becomes the basis for taking positions on issues and priorities are set for Fly-In lobbying. In the early years of the Fly-In, AAW members made personal visits to all 535 congressional offices.

Today’s technology has made it possible to provide our policy positions to every agricultural attache electronically as well as in print.

AAW’s policy positions are available at our website.

For more information about AAW:

<http://www.americanagriwomen.org>

American Agri-Women &

AAW Affiliates

A Legacy of Legislative Involvement & Accomplishment





Activists for Agriculture...From the beginnings of AAW and state agri-women affiliates, a great strength of the organizations have been in their involvement in legislative issues. AAW members are a powerful grassroots that many other organizations and lawmakers have looked to for input.

Issues that got us started...Oregon Women for Agriculture is an AAW affiliate organization formed in 1969 by farm women in the Willamette Valley concerned about the shutdown of grass seed field burning. The 1970s brought inflation, a national beef boycott and widespread consumer health advice that called for eating less red meat. That was a key factor that brought farm women together to take action.

The estate tax....Another key issue AAW members worked on in the organization's early years was estate taxes. Through their involvement, candidate Ronald Reagan took

this issue to heart. As President, he led the way to a whole new philosophy for estate tax, that for the first time recognized the property as being equally owned by the spouses. Until that time, a farm wife had to prove that she had contributed to the property for purposes of estate taxes. Otherwise, it was all considered the property of the husband. Even today, when farm estate tax expert Dr. Neil Harl gives seminars on the estate tax, he gives credit to AAW as the leading force in bringing about this change.

At the national level....Other federal changes AAW has played a major role in effecting include:

- * USDA recognition of spouses for farm program purposes
- * Creation of and funding for Ag in the Classroom at the national and state levels
- * Healthy Forests Initiative
- * Improvements in laws, regulations, and administration of the Endangered Species Act, and the national and state levels
- * Pro-Agriculture labor legislation
- * Improvements in pesticide laws and the elimination of the Delaney Clause (0 risk)
- * Advancement of renewable fuels
- * Insurance options and benefits for seniors and self-employed; support for association health plans
- * More favorable treatment of Forest Service and timber lands

- * Elimination of the aviation fuel tax

At the state level...At the general state and commodity affiliate level, AAW affiliates are very involved in working with state lawmakers as well as their Congressional Delegations. Many have Adopt-A-Legislator programs and special days at the Capitol; participate in alliance organizations with other ag-related organizations; have been actively involved in state farm bill discussions; and track hundreds of bills annually at statehouses across the country.

AAW affiliates have led the way in areas such as use value appraisal for farmland. In states including Iowa, Illinois, Oregon, and Michigan, AAW members have gone on to be elected to the Legislature and serve in the House of Representatives and Senate.

