

the

VOICE

of the American Agri-Woman



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We can do it together!

Focus Plan of Action 2006-2007 developed during Mid-Year

A Focus Plan of Action for 2006-2007 was developed during the Mid-Year Meeting.

American Agri-Women adopted goals in November of 1984, along with our Prime Truth and Strategies. It is a credit to those original planners for recognizing goals viable yet today.

This year at Mid-Year we divided into several groups to recommend a new plan of action for each goal and will monitor the accomplishments over the next two years. This exciting and positive process set our focus for the next two years.

Here are our original goals with the strategies we developed in our groups. In future issues of the *Voice* we'll include more information and follow-up.

Goal I: To present the real identity of American farmers to urban consumers, politicians, media and church leadership.

Strategy: Develop a marketing campaign titled "Agriculture: American-Grown Goodness" promoted by American Agri-women to make the connection between consumer and producer.

Goal II: To develop an appreciation within and outside the farming community of the interdependence of the components of the agricultural system.

Strategy: To extend an invitation to opposing groups to present their views on "hot button" issues.

Goal III: To support a marketing system which makes quality food and fiber available to all on a reasonable cost basis and at a fair profit to the farmer.

Strategy: Dedicate an issue of the *Voice* to the value of the free enterprise system as it pertains to ag history and the present; form a speakers bureau; develop alliances.

Goal IV: To seek that common ground which provides the foundation for a united agriculture.

Strategy: Combined with Goal VI.

Goal V: To effectively stand against coercive methods which unjustly attack the agricultural system.

Strategy: To identify and counter those with negative and false attitudes and actions against the ag community.

Goal VI: To develop allies to broaden agriculture's influence in the market place and in the political areas on all levels: local, state, regional and national.

Strategy: To encourage members to notify StART Committee of hot issues; develop an issue form to be available in PNL and web site; make issue info available to membership via the *Voice*, PNL and web site.

Goal VII: To develop a responsible and accountable membership that is willing to assume positions of influence in areas that affect the private enterprise system.

Strategy: Include a description of StART Committees and programs offered via AAW and the Resource Center in new member packets and the *Voice*.



Recording our plan of action 2006-2007 are Kris Poirier and Val Velde, our new AAW co-parliamentarians and former FFA members, Helen Whitmore Scholarship winners, and University of Minnesota Collegiate Agri-Women who got their start in AAW seven years ago. They both also attended the Syngenta Leadership Conference in North Carolina.

President's Column



By Yvonne Erickson
AAW President

Here it is springtime. It's the traditional time for planting and plotting our crops, arrival of new livestock and the blossoming of our produce-bearing trees. We look towards the future and how fruitful our actions, combined with Mother Nature's contributions, will be. It seems like the beginning of things and we've just had our Mid-Year Meeting!

AAW has already planned a momentous year. A Focus Plan of Action for 2006-2007 was developed during the Mid-Year Meeting. The attendees were divided into groups to address one of the seven goals adopted back in 1984. It is a credit to those original planners for recognizing goals viable yet today. Each group recommended a plan of action for their goal and will also monitor the accomplishments over the next two years. This process sets our focus for these years. Another article will explain this in more detail.

Reservations need to be made quickly for Washington, D.C. Fly-In and Symposium held this June 4-7. The hot issues determined at Mid-Year are reforms with the Endangered Species Act, agricultural guest workers program, and eminent domain. Renewable energy is also another priority topic. The Fly-In allows us access to offices and resources not accessible to the typical D.C. tourist. This action-packed agenda is something every AAW member should participate in at least once during their membership. After the first time, you may be hooked to come again—and again.

Communication is important in our organization. Please consider using the VOICE to share your ideas, programming, and successes. It is a way for all our members to hear what we are doing at grassroots level on up to our national events.

We are asking affiliates for volunteers to help serve on our many committees. Each affiliate has a committee interest form for those interested. Look in your February/March VOICE and see the choices for legislative related committees. There are also membership, education, and finance committees listed on the web site to pique your interest. AAW functions through its committees. This is a way you can activate your membership on a national level of participation. A committee comprised of only a chair is not a "real" committee. Please share your information and concerns with our chairs.

There are a number of scholarships available through the AAW Resource Center. Scholarships range from monetary help to attend AAW meetings to college financial aid. Watch for articles in the VOICE and check the web site for information.

As we move forward with our year filled with opportunity and plans, I think of the old saying "you reap what you sow." I think when you combine it with our AAW motto "we can do it together" we will look back and be proud of what we've accomplished.

Yvonne

PS: Did you know that volunteers are unpaid not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless?

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American Agri-Women 2006 Positions



AGRICULTURE BUSINESS & ECONOMICS	page 2
COMMODITIES	page 4
NATURAL RESOURCES	page 5
PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING & AWARENESS	page 7
EDUCATION	page 8

Adopted by the Voting Delegates of American Agri-Women

Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 2, 2006

American Agri-Women is a national coalition of women's farm, ranch, and agri-business organizations and individuals formed in 1974. We, as women's agricultural organizations and individuals, unite together to communicate with one another and with other consumers to promote agriculture for the benefit of the American people and the world.

To contact AAW about our positions go to our web site at www.americanagriwomen.org.

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 deferral 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 schedule 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 authorization of the "Lifetime Annuity Payout" (LAP) as a way to help Americans plan for a secure retirement. The concept of the LAP involves taxing annuity payments at the lower capital gains rates if the lifetime income option is elected.

Optional Social Security Tax for Farmers

AAW supports a change in the rule for payment of optional Social Security Tax, tying the amount that an individual farmer can pay into the system each year to the minimum amount that will provide him or her with four calendar quarters of coverage. The optional program, as originally set up, did provide four calendar quarters of coverage.

Simplification of Depreciation Rules

AAW is concerned with the increasingly complex tax rules involving depreciation of capital assets and supports the implementation of a simplified method of recovering the cost of machinery, equipment and other assets used as a part of a trade or business.

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

AAW supports allowing associations to offer group health insurance plans to individual members and small businesses.

Health Insurance, Prescription Drugs & Medicare

AAW supports the concept that citizens of the United States should have access to the best medical service available. Any legislation should reflect that view.

- AAW advocates adequate service at the lowest possible cost.
- 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 conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. AAW supports a health care system:

- 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 increases 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;
- within which decisions for specific testing and hospital stays should rest with the medical professionals.

Long-Term Care Security

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

AAW, at the same time, supports government incentives for private sector solutions, such as long-term care insurance, so that individuals and families are encouraged to take personal responsibility for long-term care planning.

Crop Insurance

AAW supports reforms to the crop insurance program:

- that would provide adequate coverage, which is actuarially sound, and at an affordable price for all commodities in all regions of the country;
- in which participation in crop insurance is voluntary;
- in which benefits from crop insurance are not subject to a gross income test;
- in which eligibility for government crop disaster payments is contingent on the producer's participation in crop insurance, when a crop insurance program is available.

AAW continues to believe that participation in crop insurance should not be a requirement for participation in other farm programs, other than disaster payments. 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.

AG LABOR

AAW believes that no single industry should be targeted with the enforcement of and compliance with laws affecting labor.

Agriculture needs the capacity to access an available and legal workforce. AAW believes that it is in the interest of our national security to create a way for workers to safely enter the U.S.

Guest Worker Program

AAW supports a guest worker program that ensures that U.S. employers have access to legal labor under rules that are simplified and cost effective.

AAW supports the creation of an ID card for employment. The cards would be issued by a US government agency. An employer, when presented with the card, could rely on that card as an indication of the individual's legal status to work in the United States.

AAW believes that the current foreign agricultural worker program (H2-A) is ineffective and must be reformed.

Border Protection

AAW supports improvement of border security.

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 cooperative efforts for international market development and promotion programs.

Port Inspection

AAW supports increased funding for USDA APHIS. Less than 2 percent of agri-products entering our country are inspected. We believe that more attention should be given to inspecting our food supply at the ports of entry.

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 an effective means to further foreign policy goals and are disruptive to international food trade.

International Organizations and Trade Agreement

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 vehicles operating within U.S. borders must meet uniform

safety standards.

AAW supports reform of the Jones Acts-Merchant Marine Act of 1920 so that shipping costs are competitive for the U.S. producer.

- The Jones Act currently places severe restrictions on U.S. businesses and agriculture by requiring that merchandise being transported entirely or in part 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 their customers are bound by such restrictions.
- Consumers are paying to protect U.S. waterborne 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 routes. Not a single U.S. coastal freighter larger than 1,000 tons 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 air freight cattle to the U.S. mainland. It is cheaper to send cattle to the mainland by air than by water because there are not qualified livestock carriers in the Jones Act fleet.

Labeling

AAW supports Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on all imported agricultural 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.

Market Consolidation

Consolidation of retail supermarkets and the questionable practice of the use of slotting fees lead AAW to support strong Congressional oversight of market consolidation. AAW believes that retail consolidation restricts trade and decreases market access for small farmers.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Telecommunications

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

Rural Economic Development

We also urge family farmers to investigate agri-tourism and alternatives which might add profit to the farming operation.

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 granting any authority to the United Nations regarding the use or management of any federal, state or private properties in or of the United States.

AAW opposes granting any taxing authority to the United Nations.

AAW supports the concept that the U.S., not the United Nations, establish the criteria to be met by developing nations prior to receiving U.S. food aid.

AAW opposes reauthorization of any designated biosphere reserves that currently do not meet U.N. criteria, and any new designation of reserves in the future.

COMMODITIES

National security requires that priority must be restored to utilize U.S. resources to produce the basic benefits of food, clothing, shelter, and fuel. The U.S. needs a safe, abundant, and secure food, fiber and fuel supply.

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.

Further, 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 proposed dam removals, the railroad monopolies, and the general lack of transportation infrastructure maintenance put all U.S. agriculture and industry, and

the world food supply in jeopardy.

Technology Fee

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 United States results in a distinct trade disadvantage to U.S. farmers by increasing their cost of production.

DAIRY

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 the need for intervention when dairy prices fall below certain levels and we urge lawmakers crafting the 2007 Farm Bill to thoroughly examine this issue.

AAW believes that future Federal Farm Policy should include a permanent intervention program which will facilitate farm business planning and financial confidence. Further, we believe that Federal Farm Policy for dairy should eliminate all regional barriers and should enhance domestic and international market growth.

GRAINS

AAW supports the continued extension of the 2002 Farm Bill as it pertains to grains.

AAW supports and promotes alternative uses of all grain and related by-products produced in the United States. We support the national energy policy that includes the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) for all transportation fuels and less dependence upon foreign oil.

LIVESTOCK

AAW is concerned about the future availability of new products to safeguard the health of animals. It is imperative that the scientific data be factual when determining the risk of antibiotic use on food producing animals. Increased global demand for meat, milk and eggs compels agriculture to use the latest technological tools. We support appropriate agricultural policies and adequate funding in agricultural research and extension through the

Agricultural Research Service and the Extension Service to ensure the necessary increases in productivity of food producing animals.

AAW supports an 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 sound, verifiable, peer-reviewed science.

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

AAW supports 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.

AAW supports a national premise registration and animal identification system for effective traceability and public confidence.

AAW believes there is a need to further develop the National Animal Identification System to be cost-effective to producers.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

AAW commends the U.S. Department of Agriculture for increasing fruits and vegetables 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

A competitive specialty crop industry is necessary for the production of an abundant, affordable supply of highly nutritious fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops, which are vital to the health and well being of all Americans.

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

HORTICULTURE

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 (IPM) 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 and biologically-based barrier designed to minimize the introduction of new, damaging, exotic pests and diseases into the United States.

NEW CROPS/NEW USES

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

AAW supports funding for 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 United States.

NATURAL RESOURCES

AAW believes in the multiple uses of natural resources. Firsthand experience is the best and most reliable source of expertise. We need policies that promote and ensure abundant, renewable natural resources and a healthy, productive environment.

For national security, priority must be

restored to utilize our resources to produce basic benefits of food, clothing, shelter and fuel.

Government agencies that have the power for decision-making affecting natural resource industries need to be held accountable for their decisions.

There should be:

- Specific timetables
- Efficiency reports
- Cost of implementation
- Balancing of harms
- Effect of no-management actions

Public Land and Animal Resource Management

AAW expects government to meet 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 damage are but a few intolerable consequences of wildlife mismanagement.

LAND USE

AAW believes that good stewardship of our 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 at least 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 erodes the very foundation on which this country, its principles, freedoms, economy and the health and productivity of its 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 supports the preservation of our nation's sovereignty and our Constitution as the supreme law of the land. AAW opposes any authority given to the United Nations re-

garding the use or management of any federal, state or private properties.

AAW opposes the designation of Scenic Byways and the resulting restrictions on private lands.

Sale of Public Lands

AAW supports access to public lands for multiple uses. Multiple uses include but are not limited to agriculture, grazing, mining, forestry, habitat and recreation.

AAW supports the sale of public lands to the private sector. Government ownership and management of land is costly. Our citizens cannot afford the multiple and compounded expense plus loss, or loss of revenues, that could be generated through the responsible use of those lands by the private sector.

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 exceeding the \$50,000 per entity cap 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, as required by law.

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, or
- 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 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. We urge 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 only be used for public safety or public use. Public use means public ownership for purposes such as roads and public buildings such as hospitals. It does not include taking property from a private owner to transfer to another private or commercial owner. If property is taken, owner must be fully compensated for property, expenses and lost income. We are opposed to the use of Eminent Domain for economic development and additional tax revenue accruing from such development.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The 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 human life and safety above any other species whether endangered, threatened or not listed.

Funding for the Endangered Species Act needs to be discontinued until such time as the Act is reauthorized.

AAW supports the following:

- Require the use of sound, verifiable, peer-reviewed science giving equal weight to historical data of the land before a listing is approved;
- Eliminate subjective biological units (sub-species, populations, stocks) 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 of property owners from regulatory takings by local, state and national agencies. If property is taken, owners must be fully compensated for loss of property at fair market value, for loss of income, and for 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. Plans must be reviewed and evaluated every five years.
- Allow for administrative appeal of qualified major decisions and/or judicial review by qualified affected parties.
- Exclude a 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.

Invasive Species

AAW does not view all non-native species as 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 on a specific set of scientific criteria. AAW believes this distinction needs to be made clear in open debate.

FORESTRY & TIMBER

Trees cover more acres of land today than they did one hundred years ago. Trees are our most abundant natural, renewable resource. All the world uses forests and their resources.

Healthy forests provide goods, recreation and wildlife habitats; clean and cool the air; and protect our water and fisheries. Good forestry practices can keep our national forests healthy and protect

them against catastrophic destruction from insects, disease and fire. These actions create jobs, fuel the economy, and provide tax dollars, both locally and to our nation. Releasing trees for commercial harvest is one of these actions. Without these actions we lose both.

AAW urges Congress to fund the implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan.

AAW supports returning to local federal land managers the ability to quickly implement the actions necessary following catastrophic events. This includes salvage logging where needed, removal of dead and dying trees, and reforestation.

AAW supports President Bush's proposal to return the management of currently designated Roadless Areas back to state and local forest management.

WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Civil Works

AAW supports the maintenance and continued development of dams, levees 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. Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. The purpose 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 the maintenance of the existing 600-foot locks for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System.

AAW supports the implementation of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan which creates 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 peer-reviewed science to ensure

that social-economic costs are justifiable, with devaluation and/or harm to individuals, communities, or states being fully compensated.

We urge Congress to disallow 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 peer-reviewed 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.

Water Treaties

AAW urges the U.S. government to continue to enforce ALL treaty obligations, including the 1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty.

Water Contracts, Water Rights And 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 does not support 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.

Wetlands

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

AAW objects to public funds supporting easements or buyouts to non-profit groups for large-scale wetlands restoration that removes agricultural land from local tax rolls and other local economic activity.

WATER QUALITY

Livestock

AAW supports the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) accepting state

regulations governing Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) as functionally equivalent for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

Non-Point Source

AAW supports a national water quality policy on non-point 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.

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, and current records on historical data to establish reasonable and attainable year-round water temperature standards for rivers and streams.

ENERGY

A well-developed diverse domestic energy supply is critical to national security. We support the 25 X '25 initiative of having 25% of our energy be produced by renewable agricultural sources by the year 2025. Advantages of this supply would be to ensure lower costs and guarantee supplies for electricity and fuel, plus improve air and water quality.

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, and
- Alternative fuels are environmentally friendly.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS

CONSUMER AWARENESS

AAW supports mandatory Country of Origin Labeling as passed in the 2002 Farm Bill. We believe that consumers should be empowered with the knowledge of where their food and fiber are produced.

ANIMAL WELFARE

AAW supports the responsible use of animals in research.

AAW supports legislation establishing stricter 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, and establishes assistance for security programs at research facilities.

AAW supports limiting the liability of farmers from lawsuits filed by consumers.

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

CROP PROTECTION

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 developed 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 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. States should be given authority to issue these temporary labels once EPA has established chemical residue tolerances for the threatened crop.

AAW supports the counterpart regulations jointly developed by EPA, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and USDA to streamline the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, & Rodenticide Act (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 strongly supports scientific evidence that the proper handling, preparation and processing of all final products minimizes the risk of bacterial contamination.

AAW strongly supports the Food & Drug Administration's decision to allow the irradiation of ground beef and encourages the FDA to allow irradiations of other food products. Illness due to food-borne pathogens can be greatly reduced with this additional tool, enhancing food safety.

To maintain a safe and abundant food supply for the American people and the world population, 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.

EPA should adhere to best professional scientific judgment and original Congressional intent in developing agency policy.

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 frame-

work and extensive testing procedures of the U.S. regulatory agencies (EPA, FDA, USDA,) that ensure the safety of biotechnological products.

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

If implemented, AAW believes that the Biosafety Protocol should be based on risk assessments and sound peer-reviewed science.

AAW condemns the activities of terrorists who destroy agricultural property and research; valuable research that has tremendous potential benefit to the farmer and the consumer. These new genetically enhanced products have the capability of improving human health and solving world environmental and nutritional problems.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

AAW supports continued research and development of tools and techniques that would support the advancement of agricultural production and processes (i.e. nanotechnology) in the U.S. for the industry and the consumer.

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 commodities vital to America and the people and communities of rural America that provide them.

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 sound science. We encourage agriculturalists to work cooperatively on common issues through education.

AAW supports the intent of the Carl D. Perkins Act, which maintains funding for vocational (career and technical) agricultural education.

AAW supports the continued funding of public and private agricultural research to ensure a stable and safe food supply for our nation.

AAW supports a national Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program with con-

tinued funding and support for a national director.

AAW recognizes the dangerous consequences of obesity in our society and supports the education of U.S. consumers about food choices based on sound science.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED!

Thank you to our Strategic Action Response Teams (StART) chair Karen Yost, coordinators, and committee chairs who pulled together our 2006 policy to take to Washington, DC, in June! And also to our officers who chaired the groups who developed strategies for our Focus Plan of Action. Both jobs involved a lot of work and advance planning. AAW also particularly appreciates other members who come to Mid-Year with their expertise, to help. This makes our organization strong and credible.

For additional information, Karen can be reached at her new StART e-mail address: start@americanagriwomen.org.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Print – This membership application form will be used for direct computer input to produce your newsletter mailing labels.

Dues may be paid through your commodity/state affiliate or mailed to: American Agri-Women, PO Box 111, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

Please check one: New Renew

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone () _____

Fax () _____

E-Mail _____

AAW Affiliation _____

AAW National Dues (\$20 for both affiliate and at-large or single member), or \$10 if a collegiate member) is enclosed:

Yes No

YES! We take Visa or Mastercard!

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Fly-In & Symposium Itinerary

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2006

3:00 p.m. - Meet at hotel to discuss agenda and issues
Evening - dinner on our own

MONDAY, JUNE 5

AM - 2006 AAW Symposium: USDA
PM - Meetings at EPA
6-7:30 PM - Reception sponsored by Farm Credit Council

TUESDAY, JUNE 6

Morning - Briefings at USDA
Afternoon - Capitol Hill visits to Congressional offices. Contact your Congressional delegates ahead of time for appointments.
5:30-7:30 - Congressional Reception

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7

AM - Meetings at Department of Interior
11 AM - Bus makes drops at hotel and Reagan International Airport

Make your hotel reservations by May 4

We will be staying at the Holiday Inn Capitol, 550 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024. For more information, contact www.holidayinncapitol.com.

Make your reservations directly at 202.479.4000 and identify yourself with American Agri-Women. The rate of \$189.00 for 1-4 occupancy is good until Thursday, May 4, 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

The hotel is two blocks from the National Air and Space Museum and about two blocks from a Metro stop with no transfers needed from Reagan Int'l Airport.

Gail McPherson scholarship still available

The Gail McPherson scholarship is for an AAW member who is a first-time attendee at the Fly-In in Washington, DC. For information about the scholarship, talk to your state president.

AAW Fly-In Registration Form

Registration Fee: \$100 (no partial registration). If you'd like to go to lunch on Tuesday, June 6, at the renowned Monocle on Capitol Hill, add \$25. Please send your check with this form to:

AAW, c/o Kathy Rhoads, Treasurer
1051 S.R. 56 East, Circleville, OH 43113
Phone: 740-474-4649
E-mail: treasurer@americanagriwomen.org

Name _____

Address _____

Phone & Fax _____

E-mail _____

*Date of Birth _____

*Social Security Number _____

(*We must have this information for security clearance at various agencies, including USDA)

Affiliate _____

Do you want us to find you a roommate? _____ yes _____ no

Special interests and issues (legislative or regulatory)

Senate and House Bills in which you are particularly interested _____

Planned arrival date and time in DC _____

Via (plane and airport, car, etc.) _____

Comments and suggestions _____



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**See AAW's web site or the next newsletter
for the 2006 Convention registration form.**

**If you would like
to receive the Voice
via e-mail instead
of by mail send your
request to Carolyn
Kleiber at Carolyn
@agpowerinc.net**

AAW is headed to the Sunshine State

Mark your calendars, reserve your room, book your flight and get ready for some FUN in Florida!

American Agri-Women invites you to its 2006 Convention, November 8-11 in Miami. "Fresh Ideas, Fresh Outlook, Fresh from Florida" focuses on the economic, regulatory, social and legislative issues facing American Agriculture, with lots of fun and friendship in between. Then experience the sights, sounds and tastes of the nation's subtropical farming region while meeting the growers who supply the nation with fresh vegetables during the winter months.

Ladies, treat your special "Agri-Man" to the Richard Petty Driving Experience at the Homestead/Miami Speedway on Thursday, November 9th. What a memorable gift for a spouse or even yourself!

This year we need to have everyone register for the convention before the end of August because the convention center is asking for a deposit by then, so help us out and make plans now! In the next issue we'll have a registration form and agenda.

Take advantage of the special AAW hotel rate by calling the Sheraton Miami-Mart Hotel at (305) 261-3800. Be sure to book your room by October 1st.

For additional details on the convention, contact Katie Edwards, chairwoman, at (305) 246-5514 ext. 226 or secretary@americanagriwomen.org.

12 The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman

American Agri-Women

Calendar of Events

June 4-7, 2006 – Fly-In

See page 11 for registration info

Holiday Inn Capitol, 550 C
Street, SW, Washington, DC.

For more information, contact
www.holidayinncapitol.com.

June 30 Veritas nominations due

July 1 Nominations due for AAW
office

August 1 Leaven Award
nominations due

August 25 Resolutions for consid-
eration at annual meeting
due

November 8-11, 2006
AAW Convention, Miami

AAW Web site

www.americanagriwomen.org

AAW Phone & Fax Numbers

Phone: 218-495-2867

Fax: 218-495-2659