Heading to D.C. for the 2015 American Agri-Women Fly-In

Symposium • Meetings Networking • Embassy Visit

By Ruth Jensen, 2015 Fly-In chair

The 2015 AAW Fly-In Team is working hard to bring you an outstanding experience as part of the 40th anniversary of American Agri-Women. With our 40th anniversary theme, “Harvesting our Past and Planting our Future,” in mind, we are inspired to bring you an amazing tour headed up by Rachael Vonderhaar of Ohio Agri-Women. We will travel to the farm at the home of president and progressive farmer George Washington. Mount Vernon will be our destination Sunday morning, where we will be greeted by our very own dedicated docent who will walk us through President Washington’s plans for his trees, vegetables, fruits and flowers. We will view how he raised his livestock and how many of his cropping patterns and tools were created.

Karolyn Zurn and the rest of the government affairs team have a great program with industry leaders for us Sunday afternoon during orientation, including Citizen Lobbyist 101 training. Karen Yost and her team are arranging an amazing symposium at the USDA that you won’t want to miss. If you have contacts in Washington, D.C., who you believe should attend, please let us know so we can invite them.

Driving Across America

By Doris Mold, Vice President of Resolutions and Vital Issues

American Agri-Women is planning a major nationwide event as part of our 40th anniversary celebration — the “Planting Our Future” Drive Across America. AAW members, led by President Sue McCrum and other AAW leaders, will travel from one end of our great country to another. Along the way, we’ll meet with affiliates, consumers, elected officials and many others to share why the U.S. has the safest, most reliable and most affordable food system in the U.S.

The goals of the drive are to:
• celebrate the 40th anniversary of American Agri-Women;
• recognize and honor the important role that women play in American agriculture;
• develop a stronger network among American agriculturalists and consumers;
• highlight the exceptional agricultural, food and fiber system in the U.S.;
• plant the future of agriculture by bringing people together to support and promote agriculture and to rise to our “Planting Our Future” Challenge.

We’ll kick off the Drive in Easton, Maine, and will finish in Portland, Maine, at our convention. We’re excited to visit with you in your home states and look forward to your ideas for special events — maybe a BBQ, a farm tour, meeting with elected officials or visits to a manufacturer, farmers’ market, fairs and festivals, etc.

The 40th anniversary committee is coordinating ideas with affiliate presidents now and we’ll share details as soon as we have them. If you have ideas or know of an organization that would like to help sponsor the drive, please contact Sue McCrum, president@americanagriwomen.org, or Doris Mold, firstvp@americanagriwomen.org.

SPRING 2015
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Hello, everyone!

Winter in the Northeast has broken several snowfall records! Let’s hope that the longer, sunny spring days bring an end to all this snow. Of course, I do remember planting potatoes once in northern Maine in May, when we were driven from the fields with a snowstorm that left six inches on the ground! As all good farmers do, we try to put a positive spin on the weather situation and call that snow poor man’s fertilizer. As we have dealt with so much snow, I know that out West they would rejoice in some major snowmelt to ease their struggles with lack of moisture. If only we could share with you!

American Agri-Women has been busy! AAW was represented at the American Rodeo in Fort Worth, Texas, and they struggled with snow, ice and frigid temperatures. Others enjoyed nice weather at the Commodity Classic. Affiliate conference calls and educational webinars have been available for all members. Other AAW members have been busy working on selection of Monsanto’s Farm Mom of the Year! It’s taking a team effort to make sure that Fly-In in June is a success. Don’t forget our newsletter. It takes many hands and hours upon hours of work to bring you the Voice. There are so many of you who help AAW behind the scenes. Keeping our website current and posting to social media take the contributions of a couple more members. Thank you for all you do!

Doris Mold and I attended Ag Week events in Washington, D.C., on March 17 and 18. I had the privilege of presenting to Orion Samuelson our AAW Veritas Award at the Ag Day dinner at the USDA. These are just a few of the things that have kept AAW members advocating for agriculture. Let us not forget all of you, who on a daily basis continue to share your time, talents, agricultural stories and expertise to be that voice of truth for agriculture.

AAW’s Mid-Year meeting had members coming together in Oklahoma City to review and update our AAW positions. We share these with our elected officials during our Fly-In in June. Thanks to all of you who helped Karolyn Zurn, AAW’s chair of government affairs and vital issues, with this task. Those who attended had a chance to weigh in on the many issues discussed. Members had the opportunity to learn more about pollinators from Laura Peterson of Syngenta and Becky Langer-Curry of Bayer. They presented us with historical and technical information on bee colonies and discussed the policy and politics of EPA’s regulatory actions. Great discussion followed!

Syngenta once again hosted 16 AAW members at their Leadership at Its Best program. Congratulations to all who successfully completed this program. This program teaches attendees to be confident when advocating for agriculture. Many of those who graduate from this program step into leadership roles within AAW and their communities. Thank you, Rex Martin, Steve Powell and your team!

Please take the time now to register and make your plans for attending this year’s Fly-In! Members of Congress need to see and hear from you at this event. This is a great chance for your voice to be heard. I look forward to seeing you there!

Spring is right around the corner. This is such a busy time on the farms and ranches. The tractors are revving up and the crops are being sown. I get so excited as I see the first green shoots of daffodils and crocus peeking out through the mud and snow. The garden is beckoning many of us. I pray that all of you have a safe and productive year.

Happy spring!

Sue McCrum, President
PO Box 630
Mars Hill, ME 04758
207-769-9317
president@americanagriwomen.org

Doris Mold, First Vice President, Resolutions and Vital Issues
PO Box 1075
Cumberland, WI 54829
612-414-7574
firstvp@americanagriwomen.org

Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf, Vice President, Communications
32919 W. 87th St. S., Milton, KS 67106
316-648-3717
communications@americanagriwomen.org

Donnell Scott, Vice President, Education
1940 Pleasant Valley Road
Manhattan, KS 66502
785-313-4454
education@americanagriwomen.org

Arlene Kovash, Secretary
11425 Pedee Creek Road
Monmouth, OR 97361
503-838-3512
secretary@americanagriwomen.org

Peggy Clark, Treasurer
2274 E. Lytle Five Pts. Road
Dayton, OH 45458
Phone: 937-885-5965
Fax: 937-885-5942
treasurer@americanagriwomen.org

Karen Yost, Past President
2343 S. Shiloh Road
Billings, MT 59106
406-860-8888
pastpresident@americanagriwomen.org

AAW Website:
americanaagriwomen.org

AAW General E-mail:
aaw@americanagriwomen.org

Twitter: @women4ag

Facebook: American Agri-Women

The Voice is published quarterly by American Agi-Women as a service to members. Contact Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf, VP Communications (information above). Deadlines: November 15, March 15, May 15, July 15.
Who Owns Nevada? Federal vs. State Land Ownership is Topic of 2015 Symposium

Are you aware of the amount of federal ownership of land in the U.S. It’s more than you think!

AAW’s 2015 Symposium at Fly-In addresses the issue with the theme, “Divided Lands: Federal vs. State Management in the West.” The Symposium will be held 9-11 a.m., June 9, at the USDA Jamie Whitten Building in Washington D.C. The Symposium is one of the main events during AAW’s annual Fly-In to D.C.

The AAW Presidents’ Council is responsible for developing the Symposium — and this year marks the 22nd consecutive time the Council has brought to Washington D.C. topics of relevance to agriculture and its influencers during the annual AAW Fly In.

This year’s event, chaired by immediate Past President Karen Yost, will focus on federal land ownership and the costs to our communities. The format will be a panel discussion of issues regarding federal land management in opposition to allowing states to manage their own lands. Panelists will expose the extreme differences of federal land ownership in the West as compared to the Eastern states and the consequences of that control.

Several states have legislation in process to transfer federal lands back to their respective states. This movement comes “at a time when the federal agencies are wasting America’s tax dollars and reducing the ability of states to have a productive economy,” says Robert Gordon, a senior advisor for strategic outreach at the Heritage Foundation. Federal land does not generate any dollars — in fact, it consumes them. What rights do states have to manage their own lands?

This topic is chosen within the compliance of Public Lands Policy in the 2014 AAW Positions.

Brunch will be served at the event and questions will be taken from the audience. We invite you to join us!

And to answer the question posed earlier: The federal government owns 85% of Nevada! The shading on the map below indicates federal ownership across the U.S.

Laura Maffei of California Women for Agriculture has arranged a special visit to the Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Included in the Fly-In are visits to the EPA, USDA and our friends at the American Council of Life Insurers.

In keeping with our desire to provide continuous improvement for AAW, we are promoting a national conference call where any AAW member may call in and participate.

Our first call was a great success, with some very good discussion. We have scheduled another call for Tuesday, May 26, 2015, at 8 p.m. Central Time. It will be an open discussion on AAW. The call-in number will be 712-432-0385, access code 272868#.
AAW Fly-In Registration  

**June 5–10, 2015, Washington, DC**  

Holiday Inn at the Capitol, 550 C Street, SW • 877-572-6951  

Name ___________________________________________  
Affiliate ___________________________________________  
Address ___________________________________________  
City __________________________________ State _______ Zip________  
Phone ________________________ Fax_________________  
Email ___________________________________________  
Date of birth___________ Social Security number_____________  
We must have this information for security clearance at various agencies, including USDA.  
Affiliate__________________________________________  
Special interests and issues (legislative or regulatory)_____________  
Senate and House bills in which you are particularly interested ______  
Planned arrival date and time in D.C.________________________  
Arriving via (flight number, airport, etc)______________________  
Roommate needed? _______ Special needs?________________  

☐ Early Bird Member Registration: $185 ($190 online)  
☐ On-Site Member Registration: $215 ($220 online)  
☐ Early Bird Nonmember & Guest Registration: $210 ($215 online)  
☐ On-Site Nonmember & Guest Registration: $240 ($245 online)  
☐ Early Bird Student Registration: $125  
☐ On-Site Student Registration: $125  
☐ Early Bird Mount Vernon Historical Farm Tour (no on-site available): $25  

Total enclosed $ ____________  

*Early Bird registration ends May 15, 2015, at 5 p.m. EST.*  

**To Register**  
Go online to americanagriwomen.org to submit the form or mail completed registration and payment to AAW, PO Box 37, Barre, VT 05641.  
Fax: 802-479-5414.  

For additional info, call Sue McCrum at 207-769-9317 or Ruth Jensen at 805-264-4476. For registration questions, contact Lisa Campion, administrative assistant, at 586-530-1771 or aaw@americanagriwomen.org.

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**Fly-In Overview:** On Sunday, June 7, 2015, we will have a briefing at 3 p.m. at the Holiday Inn at the Capitol. On Monday, June 8, 2015, we will have the AAW Past Presidents’ Symposium at the USDA and an embassy visit. On Tuesday, June 9, 2015, we will have Capitol Hill visits in the afternoon with an evening Congressional Reception. See page 5 for agenda; visit americanagriwomen.org for an updated agenda.

**Hotel Information:** We will be meeting at the Holiday Inn Capitol located at 550 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024. The official agenda runs June 7–10, 2015. You can check in beginning Friday, June 5, 2015, and check out Wednesday, June 10, 2015. The room rate is $229 per night. Please note this room rate does not include D.C. sales tax, currently at 14.5%. Please call 877-572-6951 or go to “American Agri-Women” and reference our booking code G9R. Credit card information is needed at time of reservation. Individual cancellation policy is 72 hours prior to date of arrival to avoid one night’s room tax cancellation charge on credit card provided. Please call 877-572-6951 and reference your confirmation number. Please obtain a cancellation number when cancelling a reservation. The deadline date to make reservation is Friday, May 22, 2015. Reservation requests received after the deadline date will be subject to availability and prevailing rate.

**Mt. Vernon Historical Farm Tour:** We will leave Sunday, June 7, 2015, at 8:45 a.m. from the hotel lobby to take buses to the farm. Lunch will be on your own at the Food Court Pavilion.

**Dress Code:** International standard business attire for meetings and reception. For example, tailored dresses; skirts with a blouse and jacket; and comfortable shoes. Business casual for evening tours.

**Please note:** Photographs of attendees may be taken at this event. These may appear in AAW publications and in online communications. By registering for this conference, you authorize AAW the right to use any photographs taken of you for AAW communication.
American Agri-Women Fly-In & Symposium

June 7–10, 2015 • Holiday Inn at the Capitol, 550 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024

Sunday, June 7, 2015

8:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **Bus departs** for the Mt. Vernon Farm, Hotel Lobby

11:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Lunch on your own, Mt. Vernon Farm Food Court Pavilion

12:15 p.m.–1:15 p.m. **Mt. Vernon Farm Tour**, $25 per person; must register by May 15th

1:15 p.m.–3 p.m. **Bus departs** for Holiday Inn Capitol

3 p.m.–5 p.m. **AAW Orientation and White Paper Review, Holiday Inn**

Dinner on your own

Monday, June 8, 2015

7:45 a.m.–8 a.m. **Bus departs** for the USDA Jamie Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., Hotel Lobby

8 a.m.–8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast, USDA

9 a.m.–11 a.m. Symposium: “Divided Lands: Federal vs. State Management in the West,” USDA

12 p.m.–1 p.m. D.C. Happenings Panel Luncheon, Sponsored by American Council of Life Insurers, ACLI, 101 Constitution Ave. NW

1 p.m.–1:30 p.m. **Bus departs** for USEPA, ACLI Foyer

1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m. **Ron Carleton**, Agriculture Counselor to EPA, USEPA William Jefferson Clinton, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Room 2415 WJC North

2:30 p.m.–3 p.m. **Bus departs** for the Saudi Arabia Embassy, EPA Foyer

3 p.m.–4:30 p.m. **Saudi Arabia Embassy Visit, 601 New Hampshire Ave NW**

4:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m. **Bus departs** for AAW Reception, Saudi Arabia Foyer

5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m. **AAW Reception**, location TBD

6:30 p.m.–7 p.m. **Bus departs** for Holiday Inn Capitol

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

**Breakfast on your own**

7:45 a.m.–8 a.m. **Bus departs** for the USDA Jamie Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., Hotel Lobby

9 a.m.–11 a.m. USDA Caucus and USDA Roundtable with agency officials (Secretary Tom Vilsack, Undersecretary Krysta Hardin, FSA & FDA, and Craig Regelbrugge of Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform), USDA Williamsburg Room

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. **Lunch**, USDA 3rd Floor Cafeteria

1 p.m.–5 p.m. Congressional Appointments (on your own)

5 p.m.–5:30 p.m. **Gather** in House Agriculture Committee, LHOB Room 1300

5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Congressional Reception, House Agriculture Committee Room

Return to hotel on your own

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

8 a.m.–8:30 a.m. **Bus departs** for the USDA Jamie Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., Hotel Lobby

8:30 a.m.–9 a.m. **Breakfast**, Senate Ag Committee Room

9 a.m.–11 a.m. Congressional Roundtable, SR 485

12 p.m. **Bus departs** from the USDA Jamie Whitten Building and makes one stop for those departing at the Union Station, Reagan International Airport and Holiday Inn Capitol Hotel (Note: You are responsible for your own transportation to the airport or Union Station beyond these stops)

1 p.m.–4 p.m. Additional Personal Appointments (on your own, if needed)
Defining Our Legislative Priorities at Mid-Year

American Agri-Women tackled today’s important issues at our 2015 Mid-Year meeting in Oklahoma City. Our vital issues committees diligently worked through each and every word of our positions book, ensuring that we’re sending a concise message to legislators.

Thank you to the committee chairs and to Karolyn Zurn, chair of the government affairs and vital issues committees, who took the time to research and explain the issues. The printed positions book will be available soon and posted on the website. Also, in preparation for our Fly-In to Washington, D.C., watch for white papers on the key issues including ag labor, the Clean Water Act (Waters of the U.S. rule), the Endangered Species Act and pollinator concerns.

AAW members also learned from experts on these topics, as well as how to be more effective advocates. Becky Langer-Curry of Bayer CropScience and project manager for North American Bee Health presented data on bees and addressed misconceptions related to pollinators. For instance, despite ongoing reports on substantial bee losses in some regions, the overall number of honey bee colonies worldwide has increased by some 45 percent over the last 50 years, not decreased.

Laura Wood Peterson, federal government relations manager for Syngenta, offered strategies for more effectively educating legislators. For instance, she said that AAW members should never assume that legislators or their staff are educated on the issues. We need to take the time to share our knowledge and be concise. She also said to find personal ways to connect, such as by showing photos of our operations.

Wade Cowan, president of the American Soybean Association, urged those in agriculture to work together, despite the different commodities and industries we represent. This unity will make us stronger. “We’re all farmers. We’re all ranchers. We’re all Americans,” Cowan says.

Thank you to Oklahoma Agri-Women for hosting the event, which included a tour of the Oklahoma City Memorial Museum. Go to AAW’s Flickr page to view images from the meeting: flickr.com/photos/americanagriwomen/sets.
MEMBER PROFILE: Applesauce War and More from the Eyes of Sharon Steffens

By Diana Ropp, Illinois Agri-Women

There are probably many “newer” members of American Agri-Women, like me, who don’t know that AAW was officially launched November 14, 1974, after the first national Farm Women’s Forum, a coalition meeting coordinated by Women for the Survival of Agriculture in Michigan and organized by Farm Wife News magazine. In this 40th anniversary year of AAW, it continues to be my distinct privilege to visit with ladies who were instrumental in laying the groundwork for this organization of kindred agricultural-minded spirits.

My next profile for the Voice led me to a lovely conversation with a trailblazer from Michigan. Sharon Steffens hails from the Grand Rapids area and was a member of the West Central Chapter and first state chair of Women for the Survival of Agriculture in Michigan (WSAM). WSAM could be called the root of AAW as we know it today, and, in 1974, Sharon served as the temporary coordinator of a new coalition, American Agri-Women, which was the first organization to represent all segments of the agriculture industry. The following statement of purpose was adopted: “We as women’s agriculture 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 world.”

In the early 1970s, apple processors set the floor for juice pricing at 50 cents per hundredweight and the Michigan producers determined this pricing floor was too cheap and they would picket for $1. This was the beginning of the “applesauce war.” Jo Ann Thome, Joan Hill and Pat Cohill, along with Sharon, became known as the “Fearsome Foursome” as they coordinated picket lines, raised money and connected with the media, all in the name of west Michigan apple producers. Their “we can do it together” attitude was a success and earned over $6 million dollars for the apple industry, primarily to fund the production of educational materials and underwrite women’s expenses as they travelled to hearings and spoke to other groups in an effort to inspire others to become active in the agriculture industry.

Sharon says that Laura Heuser was a fantastic speaker, and Pat Cohill was also an excellent writer and speaker. Connee Canfield founded WSAM and had the vision and wisdom in organizing the southwestern Michigan women.

It was following the applesauce excitement that the Michigan ladies knew legislation had to be drafted and connections had to be made with other agriculture-invested women around the country. So the coalition meeting was set up and the rest is history.

During the first year of the newly formed American Agri-Women coalition, a bimonthly mimeographed paper was edited and mailed out by Sharon, secretary Bernadette Rash and as many local women and children as were available at mailing time. They also developed the organizational tools that every organization must have. The first Voice of the American Agri-Woman was published in April 1976, with Sharon Steffens serving as editor.

Sharon has been married to John Steffens for 55 years and has five children and nine grandchildren. Following her tenure as AAW president and editor of the Voice, her agvocacy included almost nine years on the Michigan Agriculture Labor Commission, where she was appointed by two governors serving two different parties. She has been a member of the Michigan Apple Research Committee, Michigan Agriculture Preservation Board and Citizens Advisory Committee for Equality Opportunity-USDA; she was Alpine Township clerk, supervisor and trustee for 24 years; Comstock Park Rotary past president; and Ridge Economic Agriculture Partners past president and board member.

When I was asked to interview Sharon Steffens and then write a story, I didn’t realize at the time I would be speaking with one of the first ladies of American Agri-Women. What an inspiration to read her accolades and the organizations she has been a part of, all in the name of agriculture. Sharon was a true “agvocate” before the word even became trendy.

Nominate for the 2015 LEAVEN Award: Go to americanagriwomen.org for nomination information. Deadline is August 1. Contact chair Merlynn Verstuyft with questions: verstuyftm@gmail.com.

Michigan State University is proud to serve as the official archives of the Michigan Agri-Women and WSAM historical documents.
Nominate Our Next Leaders

By Rachael Vonderhaar, Nominating Committee Chair

Ladies, it’s that time of year again! Time to nominate our next group of leaders. American Agri-Women is a stellar organization for two reasons. First, we have top-notch members. Then, from those members, we get outstanding leadership. Each year, we have the opportunity to elect officers and board members. This year we have three AAW officers and three Foundation (formerly Resource Center; see below) board members who will be elected at our convention at Portland, Maine.

The job of the nominating committee is to set a slate of officers. This year, we will be nominating the first vice president, vice president of communications and the treasurer for AAW as well as three members of the Foundation board of directors. We also will have to nominate four people for the nominating committee for next year.

We are seeking women who are interested in these positions. Anyone seeking the nomination for the first vice president must have served on the board of directors for at least one year prior to nomination and must have attended at least one national convention in the last three years prior to nomination. The treasurer is eligible to serve two two-year terms.

Anyone seeking a nomination must fill out and submit the American Agri-Women Application for Executive Office, Nominating Committee and Resource Center Board. Job descriptions and the application can be found on our website, americanagriwomen.org, by clicking the Awards & Nominating Committees link under the For Members & Affiliates tab.

If you have any questions, please call Rachael Vonderhaar, nominating committee chair, at 937-603-1984, or email her at farmeral3@gmail.com. Please submit completed application to Rachael Vonderhaar, 4636 State Rte. 725 W, Camden, OH 45311-9610. Nominations are due August 1, 2015.

AAW Resource Center Is Now AAW Foundation

By Jane Marshall, AAW Foundation President

We are the American Agri-Women Foundation! Can you tell we are excited?! We started down this name-change road just over year ago. It is now complete. It was quite easy to get it changed in Michigan. The regulators there were actually helpful. The IRS was just slow, but they didn’t need anything extra. This name change does not change what our job is, it simply lets everyone know what we do in terms that everyone can understand. We are a foundation. I want to thank our foundation board, and especially our treasurer, Katie Yost, for all their help in this endeavor.

Donate through AmazonSmile.com

Now on to fundraising. What do you think is a perfect fundraiser? I think it would be one where I don’t have to spend any extra money. If you agree with me, then we have a perfect fundraiser for you. It is called AmazonSmile. The AmazonSmile program is just like your regular Amazon account. In fact, your regular cart and account show up in AmazonSmile. You purchase things just like always and 0.5 percent of the purchase price is donated to the charity of your choice. I would hope you would join me in selecting American Agri-Women Foundation (possibly still Resource Center) as your charity.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jane Marshall at 937-336-1456 or citizenjane@me.com.

Financing farmers and ranchers since 1916...

Nominate for the 2015 VERITAS Award:
Go to americanagriwomen.org for nomination information. Deadline is June 30. Contact chair Pat Yeagle: peyeagle@aeroinc.net.
**2015 AAW Position Statements**

### Agriculture Business and Economics

#### AGRICULTURAL LABOR/IMMIGRATION

**AAW believes labor-intensive agriculture in the U.S. faces a dire labor crisis. The costly and only legal temporary guest worker program (H-2A and H-2B) provides less than 2% of the workforce and is so badly broken as to be virtually unusable. Food is a strategic resource for the U.S., and the stability of our domestically produced food supply and other agricultural industries is at risk.**

1. **AAW supports a reliable, lawful agricultural worker program and supports a future agricultural visa program to bring workers in as needed and to keep in place the skilled workforce that is already here.**

2. **AAW opposes fines and sanctions applied to agribusiness producers who have done due diligence to hire eligible workers.**

3. **AAW supports strong border security.**

4. **AAW supports a secret ballot as the way for workers to vote for union representation.**

5. **AAW supports youth working and learning in production agriculture without government agency intervention.**

6. **AAW supports full disclosure of DOL policies, guidelines and operating procedures such as those found in the Field Operational Handbook.**

7. **AAW encourages agencies that perform labor housing inspections, including the Department Of Labor (DOL) wage and hour division, to work with growers in providing safe housing, or camps, and to allow them to correct problem areas in a timely manner before imposing fines.**

#### Homeland Security

**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, fiber and flora and the inputs required for production).**

8. **AAW supports the Bioterrorism Act and efforts to educate producers about ways to safeguard our nation’s food and fiber supply and agricultural inputs from acts of terror.**

9. **AAW supports rural crime task forces in collaboration with local law enforcement for the prevention of rural and farm crime.**

10. **AAW urges states to identify homeland security funding to support activities to protect food production and its distribution.**

#### AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH/BIOTECHNOLOGY

11. **AAW supports continued public investment, 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.**

12. **AAW supports the management and utilization of baseline data supplied by producers.**

13. **AAW supports increased research and development of agricultural biotechnology to maximize humanitarian benefits such as health and nutrition and also providing producers a greater range of management tools to promote sustainable production, which reduces energy consumption and associated environmental effects. Biotechnology offers environmental benefits by increasing production yields, using herbicide-tolerant crops, enhancing soil moisture content, reducing erosion and limiting carbon dioxide emissions.**

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

15. **AAW supports the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conclusion that genetically engineered crops are substantially similar to foods that are produced using ingredients derived from non-genetically engineered crops and that labeling is unnecessary.**

16. **AAW supports the position that any Biosafety Protocol that is implemented should be based on risk assessments and research-based science.**

17. **AAW supports the research of genetically enhanced products that have the capability of improving human health, reducing world environmental and nutritional problems, therefore condemning the theft or destruction of agricultural research and intellectual property.**

18. **AAW stands behind long-standing Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) regulatory noxious weed authority that evaluates genetically engineered plants that are no different than any other plant. Risk assessment should not be made based entirely on economic factors associated with the plant.**

#### GLOBAL & TRADE ISSUES

**AAW strongly rejects the tenets of the United Nations Agenda 21 policy of social justice as described as the right and opportunity of all people to benefit equally from the resources afforded us by society and the environment, which would be accomplished by the redistribution of wealth. AAW recognizes that the United Nations Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of extreme environmentalism, social engineering and global political control that was initiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).**

**AAW defines “sustainable agriculture,” including silviculture, forestry and aquaculture, as using farm practices and resources that produce safe, high-quality food and other products for America and the world, resulting in profitable operations that improve the land and environment for future generations.**

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

20. **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.**

21. **AAW opposes the U.S. government granting any taxing authority to the United Nations.**
22. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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 be used for barter. Every effort should be made to restate those holdings that have been transferred.

25. AAW recognizes the need for international self-reliant farm programs for developing and/or war-torn countries.

26. AAW opposes any legislation, such as emissions limits and exchange schemes (for example, Cap and Trade), which puts U.S. agriculture at a competitive disadvantage with other countries.

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

28. AAW supports protection from public servants (i.e., agencies) who through unconstitutional actions assert their authority by using unreasonable searches, seizures and entries onto private properties.

Domestic Transportation

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

30. AAW supports Congress’ passage of a national increase of truck weight limits.

31. AAW supports that the governance of U.S. ports be in line with the policies governing railroads and air. The purpose is to avoid any interruption of commerce and the prompt and orderly settlement of all disputes.

Labeling

32. AAW supports Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on all imported agriculture and aquaculture products at the final point of sale to consumers.

33. AAW supports mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), so long as implementation does not result in significant economic burden to producers.

34. AAW recognizes food safety and traceability mechanisms; however, the added cost of implementation must not be borne solely by the producers.

35. AAW opposes mandatory labeling of biotechnological products or processes.

Market Consolidation

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

International International Trade Negotiation and Policy

37. 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.

38. AAW believes that imported foods should meet the same grading and safety standards as domestic products.

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

40. AAW opposes the use of false trade barriers and punitive tariffs in trade negotiations and policy development.

41. 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.

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

Border & Port Inspections

43. AAW supports 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.

Sanction Reform

44. 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

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

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

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

48. AAW supports balanced, fair international trade agreements that open international markets to U.S. agricultural products.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AAW recognizes the potential of agri-tourism, value added and alternative crops whether for profit or education.

Telecommunications

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

50. AAW supports federal resources to build out fiber-based and wireless telecommunications for support of tele-health, electronic medical records and advancements in remote health care.
51. AAW urges that broadband be made both available and nondiscriminatory/affordable (that is, comparably priced to broadband in urban and suburban markets) for all rural Americans.

52. AAW supports the Federal Communication Commission fully compensating low-power television stations and translator owners for costs associated with broadcast spectrum changes or relocations.

53. AAW encourages the Federal Communication Commission to maintain an inventory of all spectrum usage.

54. AAW supports keeping the internet as a free means of communication; to charge for its use as a utility would cause hardship to all rural and urban Americans.

Innovation

55. AAW supports policies and funding for the development of an innovative culture in rural America through transmission of land grant universities’ research discoveries into commercial ventures.

56. AAW supports efforts by nonprofits and educational institutions to develop entrepreneurship in youth and adult populations.

Cooperatives

57. AAW supports the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in cooperatively structured enterprises, recognizing the importance of protecting and strengthening the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in a cooperative effort. This effort includes cooperatively marketing their products and acts as a bargaining agent which ensures access to competitive markets worldwide.

58. AAW supports initiatives that will ensure that community banks and the Farm Credit System remain a reliable and competitive source of credit for farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses and agricultural cooperatives.

59. AAW supports the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees’ continued jurisdiction over the Farm Credit System and regulatory oversight by the Farm Credit Administration.

Access to Capital

60. AAW supports lending policies that recognize the unique lending environment of rural areas.

Rural Hospitals

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

62. AAW supports Medicare funding for rural health services.

Rural Work Force

63. AAW supports public/private investments in the rural work force.

Rural Post Offices

64. AAW opposes the closure of rural post offices and facilities that provide rural mail distribution.

TAXATION

65. AAW supports the cash accounting method for farmers and ranchers and opposes any restrictions that would be put into place that would reduce the number of family farm corporations eligible to use the cash accounting method.

66. AAW opposes making changes to Section 1031, Like-Kind Exchanges.

Capital Gains Tax on the Sale of Farmland

67. 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. Farmers and ranchers can easily exceed the threshold in a year when their income spikes and when they liquidate their operations.

Health Insurance for Self-Employed Individuals

68. AAW supports the deduction for health insurance for the self-employed at 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

69. AAW supports an individual exemption from $5 million to $10 million, indexed for inflation.

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.

Long-Term Security and Retirement

70. 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

71. 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.

Special Exemptions for Depreciation

72. AAW supports special exemptions for purchases of machinery and equipment, land improvements, livestock and buildings.

73. AAW supports the reinstatement of the 50% bonus depreciation and the making permanent of the $500,000 Section 179 deduction.

Education

74. AAW supports agricultural education and the education about our nation’s food and fiber system which must be based on factual information and research-based science. We encourage agriculturalists to work cooperatively on common issues through education.

75. AAW supports the intent of the Carl D. Perkins Act with increased funding for vocational (career and technical) agriculture education.
76. AAW supports a national Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program with continued funding and support for a national director and regional and national conferences.

77. AAW supports funding for agricultural research and development through Land Grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure the necessary increases in productivity and safety of food, fuel and fiber.

78. AAW supports that peer-reviewed sound scientific data, as opposed to emotional rhetoric, be used when educating the public regarding agricultural production methods.

Health Insurance, Prescription Drugs & Medicare

79. AAW supports that citizens of the United States shall have access to the best medical service, health insurance, prescriptions and Medicare coverage from the most economical source.

80. AAW respects and supports continued medical research.

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

82. AAW supports 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).

83. AAW supports a health care system:
• that increases competition in the form of voluntary purchasing alliances and associations to help smaller employers and individuals buy insurance at a reasonable rate;
• that employers with temporary or part-time employees will be exempt from legislation that would require them to pay for health care coverage;
• within which decisions for specific testing and hospital stays should be determined by attending medical professionals;
• that continues to develop and use para-professional programs in rural communities as well as programs to encourage doctors and nurses to locate in rural areas;
• that promotes insurance programs that support agriculture’s unique position.

LONG-TERM CARE SECURITY

84. AAW supports continued support in caring for the elderly who are truly without resources.

85. 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.

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.

86. AAW supports the use and protection 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.

87. AAW requests an independent audit of all commodity check-offs as well as complete transparency.

88. AAW demands the retention and continued development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. AAW believes the USDA is imperative for the continued global success of our national food, fuel and fiber product security.

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

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

91. AAW supports an efficient and modern transportation infrastructure, which enables U.S. farmers and ranchers to access 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.

92. AAW urges USDA Regional Climate Hubs to use peer-reviewed data when delivering information and guidance. We oppose technologies and risk management procedures that would create a burden to those producing food and fiber.

93. AAW supports the legislative process and due process for determining major agricultural policy.

COMMODITY MARKETING

94. AAW objects to all nutrient credit trading.

CROPS

Crop Insurance

95. AAW supports crop insurance that:
• provides coverage based on current crop history and is administered by the private sector;
• provides affordably priced, adequate coverage, which is actuarially sound and voluntary, in all regions of the country;
• requires participation for eligibility in government crop disaster programs.

96. AAW supports crop insurance as a viable alternative within the Farm Program as a necessary safety net at an affordable cost to producers.

97. AAW supports the strict enforcement of crop insurance regulations with regard to abuse of the program.

Crop Protection

Pesticide Application and Runoff

98. AAW supports an amendment to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), to replace the authority granted by the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals to regulate pesticide use on or near waterways under the Clean Water Act. AAW urges Congress to clarify federal law that governs the use of resource management tools and resource protection.

99. AAW supports the continuation and the increase of the allowable exemptions to the methyl bromide phase-out under the Montreal Protocol and the U.S. Clean Air Act. This fumigant is a vital tool for U.S. producers for the viability of their crops and export fumigation uses for the stability of global agricultural markets.
100. AAW supports the re-registration of current fumigants and continued development of new fumigants for crop production and export opportunities.

Chemical Registration
101. AAW supports the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducting more timely review and determination on new product registration.

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

103. AAW supports a federal policy for the use of the best available scientific data/information in the decision-making process for regulating crop production tools.

104. AAW opposes a zero risk standard for spray drift. With today’s technology — and the ability to test parts per trillion — it is impossible to get to zero. The requirement should be that products be applied according to the label law.

105. AAW supports the policies that provide for producers to keep records on-site for chemical usage.

106. AAW supports dedicated IR-4 (Inter-regional Research Project No. 4) funding, a program to support the registration of crop management tools for minor crops. IR-4 coordinates financial and scientific resources of federal government, land grant universities and the private sector to manage destructive pests that threaten food security, consumer prices and the public health.

Fruits, Vegetables & Specialty Crops
107. AAW supports the U.S. Department of Agriculture for increasing fruits, vegetables and specialty crops for consumption in federal food programs.

108. AAW supports the continued education for the consumption of U.S.-grown produce which provides tremendous health and economic benefits to both consumers and growers.

109. AAW supports research and implementation of minimum grade quality standards for fresh fruits, vegetables and specialty crops that will improve product quality and meet consumer expectations to enhance the growers’ competitive position.

We also support a periodic review and revision of federal grades and standards to better reflect conditions due to modern harvest and marketing methods.

110. AAW recognizes and supports a diverse specialty crop industry which includes edible and nonedible crops.

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

Grains/Sugar
112. AAW supports and promotes alternative uses of all grain and related by-products 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.

113. AAW supports enforcement of limitations on foreign material in grains exported to foreign countries, including all levels of handling from the farms to the country of destination.

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

115. AAW supports research on plant-based feeds necessary to develop the regulatory structure for an offshore aquaculture industry in the U.S.

FOOD SAFETY/NUTRITION
116. AAW supports healthy eating habits, recommending a daily diet of meats, dairy, fruits, whole grains and vegetables in order to support healthy living.

AAW, to address the obesity epidemic in the United States with a special emphasis on children, supports a call to action to improve nutrient intakes and establish healthy eating habits overall. There should be an emphasis in school programs to consume more nutrient-dense foods such as low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products, in addition to lean meats, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while limiting intakes of sodium, solid fat, added sugars and refined grains.

117. AAW supports the value of the safe and affordable food supply for our nation and the world.

118. AAW supports a federal standard to maintain the U.S. food supply while maintaining consumer food confidence in the safety of U.S. agricultural products.

119. To ensure the safety of our food supply, AAW supports:

- the implementation of animal health emergency management and eradication programs;
- Hazard Analysis and Risk-based Preventive Control (HARPC);
- monitoring of the status of foreign and domestic animal diseases;
- inspections at the border to maintain a safe and abundant food supply for the American people and the world population;
- the advancements in ag chemicals and technology that play a major role in maintaining both quality and quantity.

LANDSCAPING, NURSERIES & GREENHOUSES
120. AAW supports the development of industry-driven, science-based, voluntary, Best Management Practices (BMPs), including, but not limited to, cost-share programs and other incentives that assist nurseries in meeting water quality standards and other environmental goals.

121. 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.

122. 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.

LIVESTOCK/DAIRY
123. AAW supports programs financed by producer and processor investment that increase demand for U.S. dairy and livestock products both in the United States and around the world.

124. AAW supports the use of the latest technological tools to meet increased global demand for meat, milk and eggs.

125. AAW supports availability of new
products to safeguard the health of animals.
126. AAW supports the responsible use of antibiotics and other industry-approved treatments to safeguard animal health.
127. 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.
128. AAW opposes announcements of suspect cases of infectious zoonotic diseases.
129. AAW supports timely announcements of confirmed cases of infectious and zoonotic diseases.
130. AAW supports interstate shipment of meat from state-inspected processing plants where state regulations are equal to or exceed federal regulations.
131. AAW urges the USDA to work with state and federal animal health officials to identify all animals imported into the United States.
132. AAW recommends that any federally mandated surveillance and food safety programs be accompanied with adequate federal funding.
133. AAW supports research and education into standards of care that ensure animal well-being and profitable ways to raise livestock set by marketing demands. This should require the use of peer-reviewed research-based science.
134. 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.
135. AAW supports an effective track and trace system that is cost effective to producers and enhances public confidence in the U.S. food supply.
136. 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.
137. AAW opposes the Safeguard American Food Exports Act (SAFE), which would amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, and if passed, would impose fines and/or prison time for anyone who sells, transports, imports or exports horses going to a humane and regulated horse processing facility. This measure sets a dangerous precedent to halt the transport of all other livestock animals used for food, thus creating a major attack on the agriculture industry.

Animal Well-Being
138. AAW supports the responsible treatment of animals and livestock industry participation in the development of any new policy to regulate treatment practices.
139. AAW opposes any legislation or regulations that would allow Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), or any other anti-animal industry activists access to slaughterhouses and private animal handling facilities for any reason at any time. Only highly qualified and uniformly trained states’ department of agriculture employees should have access to properties for inspections at slaughterhouses or any other animal handling facility.
140. 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 practices for the well-being of their animals.
141. AAW supports the responsible use of animals in research.
142. 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.
143. AAW supports legislation that establishes assistance for security programs at research facilities.
144. AAW supports the right of farmers to protect their records from public scrutiny.
145. 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. without onerous excessive regulations.
146. AAW supports the sale, possession and humane transportation of horses for processing across state and international borders without onerous excessive regulations.
147. AAW supports the use of standardized Best Management Practices in livestock carcass disposal.
148. AAW supports legislation that would create criminal and civil penalties for anyone secretly filming or participating in undercover investigations at agricultural facilities without the express permission of the owner of the property.

NATIVE POLLINATORS
149. AAW supports viable and vibrant pollinator communities, through continued research across all lands to improve resiliency and function in pollinator populations, and to improve long-term profitability of agriculture.
150. AAW supports promoting pollinators through further revisions to USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) field office technical guides and conservation practices.

Natural Resources
AAW defines “sustainable agriculture,” including silviculture, forestry and aquaculture, as using farm practices and resources that produce safe, high-quality food and other products for America and the world, resulting in profitable operations that improve the land and environment for future generations.
151. AAW supports the multiple use of natural resources.
152. AAW recommends policies that promote the abundant renewable natural resources in a healthy, productive environment.
153. AAW supports the use of natural resources to produce food, clothing, shelter and fuel as a priority for America’s economy and national security.
154. AAW believes that government agencies that are using decision-making powers to affect natural resource communities and 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

CLEAN AIR
155. 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 and silviculture. Any increase in dust regulation must show proof of validated scientific justification for the increased regulation.

156. AAW supports a clean air standard that does not:
• curtail production activities;
• restrict pesticide applications;
• eliminate pesticide availability;
• restrict animal agricultural feeding operations due to emissions from animal waste handling and storage;
• prescribe costly control measures for animal agriculture;
• require wasteful control measures for certain food and agricultural processing industries.

157. AAW supports research efforts to identify agriculture’s role in carbon sequestration, the process by which carbon gases are captured and stored.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
America’s security and economic solvency depend upon our military and domestic food and energy supply and must therefore take precedence over the regulations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

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

159. AAW supports the repeal of the existing Endangered Species Act. Funding for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) needs to be discontinued until such time as the Act is reauthorized and the means for funding reevaluated.

160. AAW supports state and local control of the hunting of all species of predators. Each state has different issues with animals such as, but not limited to, wolves, cougars, or bears.

161. AAW supports a requirement that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Critical Habitat designations be completed before restrictive regulatory action is taken. Concurrent social, economic and environmental cost/benefit analyses and compensatory adjustments for takings deemed necessary for species protection is required and should be enforced.

162. AAW supports an ESA consultation process requiring the use of sound, verifiable, research-based science that is transparent, quantifiable and assesses the economic impact to agriculture and natural resource production, giving equal weight to historical data of the land before a listing is approved.

163. AAW supports eliminating subjective biological units (subspecies, populations, stocks) from ESA action and pursue recovery of only significant species.

164. AAW supports the protection of property owners from regulatory takings by local, state and national agencies. If property is taken, owner must be compensated at highest and best use and for loss of income and expenses.

165. AAW supports allowing a state or private property owner who is accused of an ESA violation to continue with existing farming, logging, fishing or mining practices until the suit is resolved. No fine should be assessed unless a violation is proven and supports the implementation of an Endangered Species Recovery Transparency Act.

166. AAW supports requiring feasible recovery plans and selection of recovery measures that are most cost effective and have the least negative social and economic impact.

167. AAW strongly supports accountability by reviewing and evaluating recovery plans every five years.

168. AAW supports active involvement of all parties before federal agencies make qualified, major decisions in order to have appeal rights. This will then allow the ability to appeal.

169. AAW supports excluding a species from consideration as endangered or threatened, or de-list it, if it is abundant in any location.

170. AAW urges that the EPA acknowledges “extinction” as a natural process.

171. AAW believes only native species should be considered for endangered species status.

172. AAW opposes expansion of habitat area designations for endangered species without peer-reviewed scientific data showing the additional acres are necessary.

173. AAW opposes the U.S. listing of endangered species in foreign countries.

Once listed, the ESA authorizes the U.S. Treasury to spend American taxpayer money acquiring foreign land, water and other property interests to “protect” these species. As one way for America to spend money on foreign property, Congress and the federal bureaucracy have authorized several “Debt for Nature” swaps which allow the U.S. Treasury to forgive (“trade”) foreign debt or loans made by the American taxpayers to foreign countries with the hope that the country will stop property use and development to protect these species on the American endangered species list. Some of these “Debt for Nature” swaps include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like the Nature Conservancy or World Wildlife Fund buying the foreign debt to the U.S. for pennies on the dollar.

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

174. AAW supports the 25 X ‘25 Initiative of having 25% or more of the U.S. renewable energy sources being produced by farms, ranches and forests by the year 2025.

175. AAW supports the use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol, biodiesel, wind energy, solar, compressed natural gas 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.

176. AAW supports development of domestic oil, natural gas, coal and wind on public lands and offshore as long as international
and domestic shipping lanes are not disrupted.

177. AAW supports development of domestic oil, natural gas, coal, wind and solar energy on private land with complete compensation and notification.

178. AAW supports the creation of new refineries and the continuous updating of existing refineries. Agriculture production and distribution is dependent on the oil industry.

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

180. AAW supports biofuels programs to offer consumers alternative transportation as well as heating fuels and offer farmers additional markets.

Fracturing for oil and natural gas is based on the geology for exploration and production, which is currently granted a permit by each individual state. Each U.S. geographical area is different, so each state’s pollution control agency should prepare an environmental study prior to granting a permit for frack sand mining.

181. AAW does not support moratoriums of any kind on fracturing for oil or natural gas or frack sand mining.

182. In setting tax policy on hydraulic fracturing, AAW believes the majority of revenue from oil and gas industry taxes should stay at the local level.

183. AAW supports the passage of legislation to promote the export of raw hydrocarbons to further industry growth.

FOREST & TIMBER

Our nation has more forested acres and trees today than a hundred years ago. Natural and renewable trees offer many jobs and economic 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. We have a moral obligation to make wise use of these resources and make sure these forests are standing tall for future generations to utilize and enjoy.

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 sawlogs would make materials available to be used for generating electricity, biodiesel, bio-ethanol, or other heavy fuel oils and aid in carbon sequestration. It is not economically feasible to remove woody biomass without the removal of the traditional sawlog. Restoration Forestry is the most effective tool to accomplish forest health restoration and reduce wildfires. This includes harvesting trees, storing carbon in wood products and actively replanting trees.

184. AAW urges Congress to require the Forest Service to implement their National Forest Plans by:
• removing the excessive carbon emissions from the sick and burned acres they own;
• reducing the carbon emissions from public lands at the same rate expected of private enterprises and businesses;
• reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires on our public lands and forests, increasing timber sale program to 3 billion board feet annually and continuing to increase until they achieve the Forest Plan levels.

Wildfire activity for 2012: Wildfires burned over 9 million acres in 2012 with a suppression price tag of almost $2 billion dollars. Catastrophic wildfires take their toll in property and lives as well as air and water quality degradation and environmental devastation. 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, only 1% of all wildfires, consume 95% of all the burned acres and 85% of all the suppression costs.

185. AAW supports creating a separate fund to allow extraordinary wildfires to be treated the same as other natural disasters.

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 catastrophic wildfires. Forest fires are more frequent, bigger in size and catastrophic in nature.

AAW urges Congress to reauthorize the 10,000-acre categorical exclusion to address imminent threats such as uncharacteristic loads, epidemic insect infestations and unhealthy, overcrowded forests.

186. AAW supports the creation of new refineries and the continuous updating of existing refineries. Agriculture production and distribution is dependent on the oil industry.

AAW supports the passage of legislation to promote the export of raw hydrocarbons to further industry growth.

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

Wildfire activity for 2012: Wildfires burned over 9 million acres in 2012 with a suppression price tag of almost $2 billion dollars. Catastrophic wildfires take their toll in property and lives as well as air and water quality degradation and environmental devastation. Fire-fighting costs account for nearly 50% of the Forest Service’s annual budget.

A study entitled “Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Four California Wildfires; Opportunities to Prevent and Reverse Environmental and Climate Impacts” authored by Dr. Thomas Bonnicksen, Professor Emeritus of Forest Science at Texas A & M University, focused on four separate wildfires in California: the Angora Fire (2007), Fountain Fire (1992), Star Fire (2001) and Moonlight Fire (2007). These fires burned 144,825 acres. The initial combustion had a carbon footprint equal to 1,864,624 passenger cars for one year. The long-term effect of decay had a carbon footprint equal to an additional 5,098,009 passenger cars for one year.

188. AAW urges legislation to offer cost sharing towards environmental quality incentives and tax incentives for developing renewable energy sources (including woody biomass), habitats and/or water improvements.
Fifty-one percent of our nation’s forests are privately owned and more than 1/3 of these acres are part of a farm, an important part of the rural landscape. AAW urges the expansion of the domestic forest products market.

189. 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, which would deter frivolous lawsuits.

INVASIVE SPECIES

AAW does not view all nonnative 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.

191. AAW believes the phrase “invasive species” needs to be defined as a specific set of scientific criteria and this distinction needs to be made clear in open debate.

LAND USE & PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

193. 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 the land.

194. AAW recognizes that a family farm, ranch, or private timber concern 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.

195. AAW opposes the elimination of productive agriculture lands to construct artificial wetlands.

196. AAW opposes any authority given to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 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.

197. 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

198. AAW supports access to federal lands for multiple uses including but not limited to agriculture, grazing, mining, drilling, forestry, habitat and recreation.

“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.

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

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

201. AAW supports efforts to prevent entities from setting up “shell” companies in order to obtain funds on conservation payments.

A classic tax avoidance operation is based on the buying and selling through tax haven shell companies to disguise true profits.

202. AAW supports restricting and monitoring the conditions by which private nonprofit groups and nongovernmental organization (NGO) groups can purchase land with the intent to sell or transfer ownership of that land to the government.

203. The federal government must show where their authority comes from to acquire land or take the use of the land.

204. AAW strongly 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). (Numbers from wilderness.net.)

UPDATE: As of January 2014, the National Wilderness Preservation system currently contains 762 wilderness areas comprising 108,916,658 acres. This is an approximately 1,203% increase in lands set aside since 1964.

Private Property Rights

205. AAW supports legislation that reinforces our citizens’ constitutional private property rights that require just and complete compensation at highest and best use for the taking of private property.

206. AAW opposes “ takings” legislation that devalues land by:
- regulatory action;
- activities that negatively impact adjacent land by creating buffer zones, scenic byways, scenic viewsheds and scenic viewscape;
- activities that impact landowner’s rights in any way, or by endorsing conservation easements.

AAW contends that water is property (the Hage vs. United States Takings case, January 26, 2004—present). Any reallocation of the water permitted for private use by government is a taking. Government is obligated to compensate the owners of privately held water at the highest and best use of the property when the public deems a necessary beneficial use of that water.

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

208. AAW urges Congress to take no action
outside those enumerated powers found in Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution that would infringe upon the rights left to the states and to the people. Article 1, Section 8, enumerates these rights, which are limited.

209. AAW opposes the right to trespass onto private property by land or water access.

Eminent Domain
210. AAW opposes the use of Eminent Domain for the purchase of private property from an owner to transfer or lease to another private or commercial owner.

211. AAW supports compensation at highest and best use when property is taken.

212. AAW opposes the use of Eminent Domain for economic development and additional tax revenue accruing from such development.

213. When Eminent Domain is used for public welfare or safety, AAW opposes the government acquiring more land than necessary for the project.

214. AAW strongly opposes the taking of private property by postings on the internet. We support written notification through registered mail of any intent related to private property.

215. AAW supports every effort to use existing public land before imposing Eminent Domain.

216. AAW opposes the taking of private property by Eminent Domain to construct the planned North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Transportation Corridor that will reach from Mexico to Canada.

217. AAW opposes the use of Eminent Domain by a foreign country.

PUBLIC LAND & ANIMAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
218. AAW expects the government to comply with the same standards imposed on citizens and businesses regarding the management of natural resources and 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.

219. AAW supports active, responsible management of wildlife.

WATER RESOURCES

Water Quality

Non-Point Source
220. 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.

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

222. AAW urges Congress to clarify that access roads on federal lands are not a point source pollution.

Data and Monitoring
223. 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.

224. AAW expects 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.

225. AAW objects to non-peer-reviewed data, including citizen scientists and other collections processes that rely on volunteers, as being the basis upon which government agencies develop their regulations.

Water Management

Civil Works
226. AAW supports the maintenance and continued investment for development of projects that give states the control to develop and manage water quality programs specific to the states’ own watershed issues.

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

229. AAW supports the implementation of a plan for systematic flood protection for the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and the Red River of the North.

230. 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 credible research to ensure that socioeconomic costs are justifiable with devaluation and/or harm to individuals, communities or states being fully compensated.

231. AAW urges 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 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.

232. AAW advocates policies that promote abundance of water resources.

233. AAW supports allowing voluntary private funds for modernization of locks and dams.
Navigable Waters

234. AAW demands retention of the word “navigable” in the Clean Water Act.

235. AAW opposes proposed changes to the Clean Water Act that expand federal government’s jurisdiction over all intrastate waters including groundwater, storm water, ditches, culverts, pipe, tile, desert washes, sheet flow, erosion features, farm and stock ponds, and prior converted cropland.

Water Contracts, Water Rights and Ownership

A dedicated and secure water supply is critical to national and food security.

236. AAW urges Congress to honor its contractual obligations to agricultural water users who rely on federally constructed water projects for irrigation supplies. Full contract supplies are essential to maintain productive farmland.

Leadership At Its Best in Oklahoma City

By Lauren Schwab, Ohop Agri-Women

Eighteen American Agri-Women from across the country were selected to participate in Syngenta’s Leadership At It’s Best program in Oklahoma City following the AAW Mid-Year Meeting. The program opened with a formal reception and dinner welcoming the participants and encouraging them to be confident when they present to agriculture. This better equipped them to be at their best!

Throughout the program the women were encouraged to begin using the leadership skills they have acquired to be the best leaders for agriculture in their homes, states and country through AAW. The participants were taught to be futurists in thinking about what the future of agriculture brings and how more women can come into leadership roles.

Special thanks goes to Syngenta for supporting American Agri-Women as leaders. Special thanks also to AAW President Sue McCrum and AAW Vice-President Doris Mold for being with the participants and encouraging them to be at their best!

For more information on AAW’s opposition to Agenda 21, please refer to the Voice Extra at americanagriwomen.org.

Congratulations to the 2015 American Agri-Women graduates of Syngenta’s Leadership At Its Best program

Kristi Bishop, Oklahoma
Kristy Bray, Maine
Lisa Campion, Vermont
Kristin Devoe, Maine
Emily Duerst, Oregon
Tracy Duerst, Oregon
Tracy Fitzsimmons, West Virginia
Jessica Getty, New York
Abbi Goldenberg, Oklahoma
Priscilla Koser, Illinois
Erica Leubner, New York
Alisha Nord, North Dakota
Lauren Schwab, Ohio
Jesse Scott, Montana
Melissa Wahl, Kansas
Stacey Whitener, Texas

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.

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

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

240. AAW supports a prominent role for 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.

241. AAW supports the protection of water, existing water rights and future water availability for agricultural use.

Wetlands

242. AAW objects to a national policy of no impact to wetlands, versus the previous policy of minimizing impacts to wetlands.

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

244. AAW supports the Supreme Court ruling that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not have jurisdiction over wetlands that are not adjacent to navigable waters.
By Pam Townsend, Maine Agri-Women

The Maine Agri-Women are planning an exciting convention November 5–7 in Portland, Maine. The convention theme is “Harvesting for the Future.” Some of the highlights include a tour of Pineland Farms with lobster feeding and a visit with First Lady Ann LePage and Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America.

Let’s not forget shopping! There will be opportunity to shop at L.L.Bean and the shopping mall located across from our convention hotel, the Double Tree by Hilton. There is a Starbucks and a Cracker Barrel nearby. Be sure to come ready to see beautiful Maine and gather with American Agri-Women from across the country. It’s sure to be an unforgettable experience filled with friends, fun and, of course, American agriculture!

More News in the Voice Extra

Go to americanagriwomen.org for more stories, including:
- Visting the Saudi Arabian embassy at Fly-In
- The winning essay from the 2015 Ag Day essay contest
- History project seeks submissions
- Scholarship and webinar opportunities
- And more!

For more information, visit maineagriwomen.wordpress.com/2015-aaw-convention or contact Pam Townsend at 207-429-9678 or pam@countysuper.spuds.com.

Book your hotel room at the Double Tree by Hilton at 363 Maine Mall Rd., South Portland, Maine, 04106 by calling 207-775-6161 and using the booking code AAW.

Advertising Rates & Deadlines

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Contract rates available.
Ask about special sizes and display advertising.

To advertise, contact Lisa Campion at (586) 530-1771 or aaw@americanagriwomen.org.

Ad Deadlines: Noon on the 15th of the previous month.
- November 15 for Winter Issue
- March 15 for Spring Issue
- May 15 for Summer Issue
- July 15 for Fall Issue