AgDay365 National Kick-Off at Ag Day

By Doris Mold, AAW President

American Agri-Women was out in force during National Ag Day on March 21 and Ag Week in Washington, DC. Members came in early to attend meetings with supporters and to attend the Farm Bill Summit. We “warmed-up” National Ag Day participants the night before by handing out AgDay365 pins at the Agri-Pulse Reception. The next morning we enjoyed listening to Lauren Schwab.

Mid-Year Meeting Yields Information and Positions

By Jane Marshall, AAW VP of Communications

American Agri-Women had a great time at this year’s Mid-Year meeting held in Dallas, Texas.

On Thursday regular events were held — the Executive Committee meeting, the Foundation Board meeting and their joint meeting. During the Board of Directors meeting, each officer gave her report. Also during this meeting the Policy and Procedures Manual was referred to a committee to be updated.

On Friday, after the official opening was held, issues updates were presented. Then because of the devastation from the wildfires in Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado, the executive team decided to hold a fundraiser for the relief efforts in the four states. This was in the form of a silent auction of a quilt, an Oklahoma basket.
President’s Report

Dear AAW members,

Spring is officially here and the pace of life picks up. We know that it is always busy for us Agri-Women no matter the time of the year. We just finished a particularly busy period as an organization. American Agri-Women rolled out the AgDay365 Campaign to the rest of agriculture on March 21, National Ag Day in Washington, DC. We hosted our first ever Ag Day event in the nation’s capitol and had terrific interaction with agriculturalists from across the country. Perhaps more importantly, we engaged young agricultural advocates in helping to spread the Ag Day is Every Day message to everyone through a special AgDay365 media challenge. Kudos to the team who planned and implemented the event in Washington, we have been invited back for next year, perhaps the best testament of all.

Speaking of AgDay365, thank you to all affiliates who have been doing social media posts and are planning events around the country. I have heard of some exciting things out there — activities at the National Festival of Breads, AgFest, harvest dinners, state fairs, county fairs, advocate training, affiliate social media challenges, and more. There are many of you planning pollinator projects and events with the Bayer Feed A Bee kits as part of your AgDay365 activities, as well. A huge thank you to the AgDay365 committee who has been making sure we have social media posts every day since Convention. They have also been representing us at events – Commodity Classic, World Ag Expo, and the Dallas Farmer’s Market — and making plans for future activities. Committee members will also be contacting affiliates to get information on ag facts and what is happening in your affiliate to promote agriculture, so that we can feature this information on our social media platforms.

AgDay365 reminds us that it is important for us to remember that we need to advocate for our, fiber and renewable energy system every day. Whether it be visiting with policy makers, educating consumers or working with students, we all have a role to play in keeping agriculture front and center in people’s minds. Everyone in this country is touched by agriculture many times during their day and we have the tremendous opportunity and responsibility to make a connection with them in a meaningful way. AgDay365 is an avenue to do just that.

AAW and many of our members have been hard at work in the Government Affairs area to make those connections and provide good information in our advocacy efforts. We had an excellent Mid-Year Meeting in Dallas as we discussed a wide range of concerns and issues and distilled them down to meaningful ag policy positions that will be taken to Washington, DC June 4-7 during our Fly-In. Thoughtful discussion on these important issues helped all members in attendance develop a deeper appreciation of the work that we have ahead of us as we prepare to talk to policy makers about our concerns for agriculture and rural America. You can read the results of all of the discussion and hard work in this issue of The Voice. Thank you to the Mid-Year committee and members in attendance who all made things happen. We also took time out to fundraise for wildfire relief — thank you to Jane and Thomas Marshall for the beautiful quilt that they made and donated as an auction item for the
who was featured on the National Ag Day Breakfast Smart Farming Panel. Lauren is a U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance Face of Farming & Ranching winner and vice-president of Ohio Agri-Women. Following the panel discussion it was time for our big reveal to all of agriculture – AAW President Doris Mold announced the AgDay365 campaign to the National Ag Day participants and was later interviewed about the AgDay365 campaign by RFD-TV.

AAW coordinated the first ever National Ag Day Young Advocate student luncheon. “Raising Our Voices Together” Agriculture Advocacy Event, which was part of American Agri-Women’s AgDay365 – Ag Day is Every Day. One hundred top-level student leaders in FFA, 4-H, MANNRS, and AFA from around the country were treated to pizza from “We the Pizza” as they participated in an AgDay365 Social media challenge. They competed for prizes and went home with AgDay365 bags. These students were brought in by the National Agricultural Council to participate in Capitol Hill advocacy efforts on National Ag Day. We are currently working on the next stage of our project with the students, which will be an AgDay365 Challenge competition. The first time effort was warmly received and we have been invited back for 2018.

After our luncheon, members made stops in Congressional offices and then headed to two Ag Day receptions to network. The following day we participated in a roundtable discussion on women in agriculture with the USDA, National FFA, American CattleWomen and Farm Bureau National Women’s Committee at the American Farm Bureau offices. We also had presentations on the upcoming Farm Bill and the 2017 Ag Census.

We appreciate the support of our inaugural AgDay365 sponsors: Bayer, Bayer Bee Care, Caterpillar, CCI Marketing and Farm Credit. A great national kick off was due to the hard work of the AgDay365 committee. Thanks also to the terrific work on the ground of the National Ag Day team which included: Sue McCrum, Heather Hampton+Knodel, Krystal Doolittle, Natalina Sents, Lynn Woolf, along with Doris. We also give kudos to AAW members Dayna McCrum, who was one of the National Ag Day Young Advocates, and Karolyn Zurn who was in DC for the Farm Bill Summit as they both pitched in to help with our AAW activities.

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Fundraising efforts. Thank you to Abbi MacRae for raising our awareness on the wildfire and the relief activities, to our members for their purchases and donations through “pass the hat,” and to our anonymous donor for lifting us up. We will also be offering some business plan coaching to farm and ranch families in need of this service down the road.

There are many new and ongoing projects in several areas that countless members have had a hand in. Webinars have been offered on the Basics of Farm and Ranch Business Management in cooperation with the Farmer Veteran Coalition, if you missed the live webinars you can find the recordings on our website. We are in the midst of Farm Mom evaluations, and we are working on new member and leadership development activities.

We are looking forward to an excellent Fly-In June 4-7 that has been well organized by the Fly-In committee. We will have some particularly special activities this year including laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and a tour of Loudoun County, VA, along with an AgDay365 activity – both of these are optional activities. Minnesota Agri-Women is looking forward to hosting our 2017 Convention theme “Shining Out Lights on Agriculture” and is working on an outstanding meeting to be hosted in Bloomington, MN, November 16-18.

Since the last convention it has been my honor to represent AAW at many events and in many ways including: Soybean College, National Panel on Farm Structure, World Ag Expo, Oregon Women for Agriculture convention, National Ag Day, various interviews and more. I am looking forward to many more opportunities to get the word out about AAW in the coming months. I am also looking forward to a terrific spring season and wish you all a beautiful, happy, successful spring and early summer!

Finally, a thank you for all you are doing to remind people that AgDay365 - Ag Day is Every Day.

Doris Mold
and a FarmHer gift certificate followed by passing a hat. There was also an anonymous matching donation up to $1,000. Through these efforts AAW raised $2,439.

Most of the day on Friday was taken up with the various committees working on their position statements. Friday evening, each officer went out with a group of ladies so that everyone could get to know each other better and to give members the opportunity to learn more about the organization and its leadership.

Saturday morning began with a very informative presentation about H2A visas given by Genesis Salmon with H-2A Complete II, Inc. Her father was an immigrant and he started a sheep shearing business using migrant labor. She learned to do these visas through the person who originally helped her father.

Merlynn Verstuyft and Becky Wiley of Pecan Grove Farms then gave an impromptu presentation about the Border Patrol. Becky’s husband is a Border Patrol agent. She indicated that the issue is not so much catching the illegals, its what happens to them after they are transferred to other agencies. Many times it becomes a catch and release.

There was then lively discussion about the positions, so much so that the meeting even went over the scheduled ending time. The positions were completed mid-afternoon, though then some members then went to the Dallas Farmer’s Market for an Ag Day 365 event to complete the 2017 AAW Mid-Year meeting.

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Warren E. Clark Awarded 2016 VERITAS Award

Warren E. Clark, owner/president of CCI Marketing, received AAW’s prestigious VERITAS Award at its convention in North Carolina last November. He has been a long-time behind-the-scenes, pro bono communication support and service provider for AAW. He has provided his CCI Marketing clients with agricultural marketing communications consulting services for more than 30 years.

Pictured here is AAW President Doris Mold presenting Warren with the award at the World Ag Expo in February.

Warren said, “I hope all AAW members can tell from the look on my face how touched, humbled, and appreciative I am. THANK YOU ALL!”
Fly-In 2017: Rural America and National Security
June 4-7, Washington, D.C.

By Heather Hampton+Knodle, AAW First VP

Your AAW Fly-In Committee chaired by Ruth Jensen is AMAZING! This group of ladies is going to roll out a combination of relationship building, firsthand knowledge acquisition, access to decision makers and monumental sites in a little more than 72 hours!

As you make your travel plans to Washington, D.C., please plan on joining us for our early start (around 8 a.m. Eastern Time) on the Sunday tour to Arlington National Cemetery. President Doris Mold will lead AAW in laying an honorary wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Our tour at Arlington will feature women veterans then we will head to the National Portrait Gallery which was originally the U.S. Patent Office and served as the collection point for the first survey of agriculture. Orientation will feature an overview on meeting with legislators, our White Paper priority issues and a few speakers booked by our Governmental Issues Chairman Karolyn Zurn. We’ll get some depth on the Endangered Species Act and other key issues.

Monday will start with the AAW Symposium: National Security and the Role of Rural America at the USDA Press Room. These events are always informative. It’s a panel-style presentation with multiple speakers talking about different aspects of the issue. There will be lots of opportunity for questions and discussion.

We will meet with Administration officials including agency leaders from USEPA, the White House and USDA. Lobbyists with up-to-the-minute status reports on issues of interest to AAW members will brief members. We are also planning a visit to the Vietnam Embassy.

AAW members are encouraged to schedule visits with their Senators and Congressmen for Tuesday afternoon. Remember to invite them and their staff to our congressional reception from 4:30-6:30 in the House Agriculture Committee room.

Attendees will dine on their own each night. All are invited to stay over for Wednesday’s tour to Loudoun County, Virginia where their economic development office works closely with agriculture. AgDay365, shopping and a winery are among the Wednesday activities to taste the local flavor of Loudoun County. You can register now at americanagriwomen.org and be sure to book your hotel room soon.

Fly-In Webinar

We recommend attendees sign up for the webinar on May 19, 2017, that will cover the Fly-In agenda and logistics as well as walk through the White Papers on our priority issues for this June. You can register for the webinar at the AAW website, americanagriwomen.org.

Fly-In Meeting Descriptions

Orientation: The Orientation Meeting is late Sunday afternoon to allow participants time to arrive and to check in to the hotel. Those that choose to participate in the morning event generally arrive the day before. Orientation is the opportunity for everyone to gather together, get an overview of the itinerary for the week, review the key AAW issues that participants will take to their appointments, and hear from invited speakers. This is also the time when the name tags, agenda packets, and advocacy packets are distributed.

Symposium: This year AAW celebrates its 27th Annual Symposium. The AAW Past Presidents host the Symposium to feature an expert panel on a timely topic. After the speakers present, audience members may ask questions from a microphone. This event is usually recorded, transcribed and made available to members.

Agency Roundtable: The USDA Agency Round Table has always been a favorite for Fly-In and planned for Tuesday morning. High level agency officials are invited to speak in 15 – 20 minute increments, allowing 5 minutes for Q&A. Two – three hours are generally allowed for this event, depending on the number of speakers.

Tour Guide: Daniel Minchew will be our Tour Guide on Sunday. Mr. Minchew has served in many roles including Chairman, US International Trade Commission; Executive Office of the President – President John F. Kennedy; Executive Office of the President – President Lyndon B. Johnson; and Office of the Secretary of Defense – Secretary Robert McNamara.
Hotel Information: We will be meeting at the Residence Inn Marriott located at 333 E. Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20024. The official agenda is June 4-7, 2017. The room rate is $259.00 per night from June 3-7, 2017. Please note this room rate does not include DC sales tax, currently at 14.5%. Please call 202-484-8280 for reservations. Credit card information is needed at time of reservation. The hotel requires a room and incidental deposit in the amount which can be paid by cash or credit card. The deposit will be returned after 7-10 business days. Individual cancellation policy is 72 hours prior to date of arrival to avoid one night’s room plus tax cancellation charge on credit card provided. Please call 202-484-8280 and reference your confirmation number. Please obtain a cancellation number when cancelling a reservation. The deadline date to make reservations is May 26, 2017. Reservation requests received after the deadline date will be subject to availability and prevailing rate. The hotel check in time is 4pm and check out time is 11am. Complimentary wireless internet in guest rooms and breakfast is included. Parking is currently $41.30 per day. There is no airport shuttle. You can take a taxi, subway or rent a car. If you need to ship anything to the hotel, please send to: Residence Inn Marriott, ATTN: American Agri-Women, June 3-7, Your Name, 333 E. Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20024.

Optional Sunday Tour: We will leave Sunday, June 4, 2017 at 7:15 a.m. from the hotel lobby for a Women in Military Service to American Tour in Arlington National Cemetery, view the American Agri-Women Wreath Laying Ceremony lead by President Doris Mold at Arlington National Cemetery, and then going to the National Portrait Gallery. Lunch will be on your own. The bus will depart at 7:15 a.m. and return to the hotel at 2 p.m. Registration is at 2:30 p.m. with the Orientation at 3 p.m.

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.

For additional information, please call Ruth Jensen @ 805-264-4476 or visit us at: www.americanagriwomen.org. For registration questions, please contact Lisa Campion, Executive Assistant at 586-530-1771 or aaw@americanagriwomen.org.

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.

AAW 2017 Fly-In Registration
June 4–7, 2017, Washington, DC
Residence Inn Marriott, 333 E. Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20024

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
City ____________________ State _____ Zip ________
Phone ________________ Email ______________________
Affiliate _______________________________________

Special interests and issues (legislative or regulatory) __________________________________________

Senate and House bills in which you are particularly interested ______________________________________

T-shirt Size (only if you register before May 15) ____________________

Roommate needed? _____ Special needs? ____________________

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**You must register by June 1, 2017. No on-site registration.

AAW will follow up with you to obtain your social security number if required by the federal agencies for security clearance ahead of time.

To Register

Go online to americanagriwomen.org to submit the form or mail form and payment to AAW, PO Box 743, Colchester, VT 05446. Phone: 586-530-1771; email: aaw@americanagriwomen.org.
AAW 2017 Fly-In Schedule

June 4–7, 2017 • Residence Inn Marriott, 333 E. Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20024

Sunday, June 4, 2017

You must pre-register to attend the tour and ceremony. Breakfast is included with your hotel room and served in the dining area.

8 a.m. Board Bus, Hotel Lobby
8:15 a.m. Bus Leaves for Arlington National Cemetery, Hotel Lobby
8:45 – 10 a.m. Memorial Tour Honoring Women in Military Service to America
10:15 – 11 a.m. Wreath Laying Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery
11:30 a.m. Bus Departs for National Portrait Museum (granola bars and water on bus; lunch on your own)
12 – 1 p.m. National Portrait Museum Tour
1:30 – 2 p.m. Bus Departs for Hotel
2:30 p.m. Registration, Residence Inn
3 – 5:30 p.m. AAW Orientation, Residence Inn

Dinner on Your Own

Monday, June 5, 2017

7:45 a.m. Board Bus, Hotel Lobby
7:50 a.m. Bus Departs for USDA Jamie Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., Jefferson Drive Entrance
8 – 8:30 a.m. Security Clearance
9 – 11 a.m. 27th Annual Symposium – National Security and The Role of Rural America, Sponsored by the AAW Presidents’ Council, USDA 107-A Press Room
11:30 – 12:30 pm Lunch and Open Mic, USDA 3rd Floor Cafeteria
12:45 p.m. Special Assistant to the President for Agriculture, Trade & Food Assistance
2 p.m. Bus Departs for EPA
2:15 p.m. Security Clearance

2:45 - 3:30 p.m. EPA Agency Visit
3:45 p.m. Bus to Vietnam Embassy
4:00 p.m. Vietnam Embassy Visit
5:15 p.m. Bus Returns to Hotel

Tuesday, June 6, 2017

7:15 a.m. Board Bus, Hotel Lobby
7:30 a.m. Bus Departs for USDA Jamie Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., Jefferson Drive Entrance
7:45 a.m. Security Clearance
8:30 – 11:30 a.m. USDA Caucus (Secretary, FSA, NASS, APHIS), USDA Williamsburg Room 104A
Noon-1:30 p.m. Lunch and Open Mic, USDA 3rd Floor Cafeteria
1:30 – 4:00 pm Congressional Appointments (on your own)
4 – 4:30 p.m. AAW Meeting in House Committee Room
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm Congressional Reception, Longworth 1300

Return to Hotel on your own

Wednesday, June 7

8 a.m. Bus Departs for Tour to Loudoun County, VA and AgDay365 Activity - agriculture and the tremendous economic development activities taking place in Loudoun County. Will include a tour of a variety of ag value added businesses - hops, wine, cider and delicious food with opportunities to visit with the people engaged in these businesses.
4 p.m. Approximate Airport Drop Off at Dulles
5 p.m. Approximate Airport Drop Off at Reagan National
Thank You,
AAW Sponsors

AgPR/AgNewsCenter
American Council of Life Insurers
Bayer CropScience
BIO
Caterpillar
Chain Land & Cattle Co.
CropLife America
Dow Agro Sciences
Farm Credit
Food Industry Environmental Network
Mahindra North America
Monsanto
National Association of Broadcasters
Nationwide Agribusiness
Nutra-Lix
Osborn+Barr
Syngenta
TriEst
Western Skies Strategies

AAW Foundation Scholarships and Mini-Grants Available

By Janell Reid, AAW Foundation President

The American Agri-Women Foundation hopes to award three Gail McPherson Fly-In Scholarships this year. Each scholarship is $500 and is awarded to first time attendees. The applications are due May 1, 2017.

AAW Foundation will once again be giving two Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarships. The Jean Ibendahl Scholarship is for $1,000 and for students 18-23 years old. The Sister Thomas More Bertels Scholarship is for students over 24 years old and is also for $1,000. Scholarship applications are due June 1, 2017.

Applications for all these programs can be found on the AAW website under the Foundation tab.

Nominations Sought

American Agri-Women is a stellar organization for two reasons. First, we have top-notch members. Secondly, from those members we get outstanding leadership. Each year we have the opportunity to elect officers and board members. This year is no exception. We have three AAW Executive Committee officers and three AAW Foundation board members who will be elected at our convention in Minnesota.

It is the job of the Nominating Committee 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 will also 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 a national convention in the last three years prior to nomination. Anyone seeking a nomination for any position must fill out and submit the American Agri-Women Application for Executive Office, Nominating Committee and Foundation Board. Job descriptions and the application can be found at americanagriwomen.org on the Members only page. Nominations are due August 1.

Questions? Contact Kathy Rhoads at 740-404-5699 cell or krhoads1@frontier.com

Condolences

AAW expresses its sympathy to the families of:
• Jeanne Mertz, AAW Past President
• Brenda Lammens, AAW Vision Award winner
• Eligio “Kika” de la Garza, former Texas Congressman

Condolence articles will follow in the summer Voice.
2017 AAW Position Statements

Agriculture Business & Economics

AGRICULTURAL LABOR/IMMIGRATION

AAW believes the continual workforce shortage facing the labor-intensive agricultural sector is a matter of national security. Agricultural production is a strategic resource in the U.S., and the stability of our domestically-produced food supply, is at risk if we do not continue to improve the temporary guest worker program. U.S. farmers make up 2 percent of the U.S. population while agriculture and its related industries account for nearly 10 percent of U.S. employment (USDA ERS 2014).

1. AAW supports public/private investments in training the rural workforce.
2. AAW supports the overtime exemption for agriculture.
3. AAW supports a reliable, affordable, 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.
4. AAW opposes fines and sanctions applied to agri-business producers who have done due diligence to hire eligible workers.
5. AAW supports strong border security.
6. AAW supports a secret ballot as the way for workers to vote for union representation.
7. AAW supports youth working and learning in production agriculture without government agency intervention, specifically, farm family youth and those youth in supervised educational experiences.
8. AAW supports full disclosure of Dept. of Labor (DOL) policies, guidelines and operating procedures such as those found in the Field Operational Handbook.
9. AAW encourages agencies that perform labor housing inspections, including the Department of Labor (DOL) wage and hour division, to work with growers to provide 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, fuel, fiber and flora) and the inputs required for production.

10. AAW supports the enforcement of statutorily-required Department of Labor internal timelines for H2A visa processing.
11. AAW supports expanding the number of migrant worker visas in the H-2B program.
12. AAW supports the call for legislation to protect the rights of workers, farmers and consumers against loss of products/production during labor disputes.
13. AAW supports wage rates for the migrant worker to be determined on a state-by-state basis with options for piece-rate, hourly rate, daily rate, or monthly rate.

GLOBAL ISSUES

AAW stands firm in defending the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States of America. We strongly urge all members of Congress to protect the sovereignty of the United States against global governance.

AAW rejects the policy of social justice, 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.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH/BIOTECHNOLOGY

14. 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.
15. AAW supports rural crime task forces in collaboration with local law enforcement for the prevention of rural and farm crime.
16. AAW urges states to identify homeland security funding to support activities to protect food production and food distribution.
17. 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.
18. AAW supports the management and utilization of baseline data supplied by producers through USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA/NASS) and USDA Economic Research Service (USDA/ERS).
19. AAW supports the investment in research and development of agricultural biotechnology to maximize humanitarian benefits such as health and nutrition and also in providing producers a greater range of management tools to promote sustainable production, which reduces energy consumption and associated environmental effects.
20. AAW supports a coordinated framework and extensive testing procedures of biotechnological products by the U.S. regulatory agencies (EPA, FDA and USDA).
21. AAW supports the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conclusion that genetically engineered plant varieties marketed to date are as safe as comparable non-genetically engineered foods and must meet the same food safety requirements as foods derived from traditionally-bred plants.
22. AAW supports the position that any bio-safety protocol that is implemented should be based on risk assessments and research-based science.
23. AAW recognizes the need for an international forum for countries to discuss their differences and cooperate on problems of common concern.
24. 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 and its territories.


26. 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.

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

28. AAW opposes the sale of U.S. public lands holdings or its mineral rights, water rights, or other resources for repayment of U.S. debts to foreign entities.

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

30. 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.

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

32. AAW supports protection from public agencies that through unconstitutional actions assert their authority by using unreasonable searches, seizures and entries onto private properties.

**TRADE ISSUES**

**Domestic**

**Transportation**

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

34. 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.

35. AAW supports investment in modernizing our transportation infrastructure.

**Labeling**

36. AAW supports labeling on all imported agriculture and aquaculture products at the final point of sale to consumers.

37. AAW recognizes food safety and trace-ability mechanisms; however, the added cost of implementation must not be borne solely by producers.

38. AAW supports voluntary labeling of biotechnological products or processes. AAW opposes mandatory labeling.

**Market Consolidation**

39. AAW supports active regulatory oversight of market consolidation. AAW believes that market consolidation restricts trade and decreases market access.

**International**

**International Trade Negotiation and Policy**

40. 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.

41. AAW supports that all imported foods and foreign-processed products, should meet the same grading and safety standards as domestic products.

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

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

44. 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.

45. 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.

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

**Border & Port Inspections**

47. AAW supports the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) having the responsibility for border and port inspections with the appropriate increase in funding.

48. AAW supports increased inspection of our food supply at ports of entry.

**Sanction Reform**

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

**International Organizations & Trade Agreements**

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

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

52. AAW supports further liberalization of trade in agricultural products.

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

54. AAW supports the protection of intellectual property in trade agreements (i.e. genetically engineered technologies, software, equipment, proprietary crops/varieties, etc.).

55. AAW opposes currency manipulation within trade agreements.

**RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Telecommunications**

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

57. AAW supports federal resources to build out fiber-based and wireless telecommunications (line of sight and satellite) for support of rural development.

58. AAW urges that speeds equivalent to metropolitan areas be made available and affordable for all rural Americans.

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

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

61. AAW supports keeping the Internet as a means of open communication.

62. AAW supports federal funding for any requirements mandated by the federal government to upgrade first responder and local law enforcement technology.

Innovation

63. 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.

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

Cooperatives

65. AAW supports the ability of farmers and ranchers to participate 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.

Access to Capital

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

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

68. 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.

69. AAW supports access to capital for beginning farmers and ranchers, as well as funding for diversification of agricultural operations and upgrades.

Rural Post Offices

70. AAW opposes the closure of rural post offices and facilities and the reduction of services that provide rural mail distribution.

TAXATION

71. AAW supports measures that will provide tax simplification for farmers, ranchers, and small business and opposes any effort to make tax laws more burdensome.

72. AAW supports the cash accounting method for family farmers and ranchers, regardless of business structure and gross income.

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

74. AAW supports restoring the “Small Partnership Exception” into tax code. Congress eliminated this provision in the 2015 Budget Bill found in Section 6231(a)(1)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code.

75. AAW supports the deductibility of all business inputs and expenses, regardless of the country of origin.

76. AAW supports business interest paid on loans to be fully deductible as it is a cost of doing business.

77. AAW supports FICA and Medicare taxes (self-employment tax) to be assessed only on wages, not on pass-through dividends to shareholders from corporate-structured farms.

Capital Gains Tax on the Sale of Farmland

78. AAW supports the $500,000/$1,000,000 exemption available on the sale of a personal residence to apply to the sale of farmland.

Depreciation

79. AAW supports the depreciation recapture rules when farm and other business depreciable assets are sold on retirement or cessation of business.

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

81. AAW supports the permanent authorization of the 50% bonus depreciation.

Health Insurance for Self-Employed Individuals

82. AAW supports the deduction for health insurance for the self-employed and family-owned corporations regardless of business structure at 100%.

Estate & Gift Tax

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

84. AAW supports repeal of the estate tax as long as the stepped-up basis is maintained.

Long-Term Security & Retirement

85. 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.

86. AAW supports investment standards to protect the client’s best interest.

HEALTH

Insurance, Prescription Drugs and Medicare

87. AAW supports mental health services, including prevention, treatment, and recovery of addiction.
88. AAW supports that citizens of the United States should have access to the best medical service, health insurance, prescriptions and Medicare coverage from the most economical source.

89. AAW supports employers being able to choose what health insurance plans to offer their employees, if any.

90. AAW respects and supports continued medical research.

91. AAW supports requiring health insurance companies to reimburse pharmacies for prescriptions at the pharmacy’s cost.

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

93. AAW supports Medicare funding for rural health services.

94. AAW supports Medicare, other government funding, and health insurance to include paying for preventative programs, such as nutrition counseling.

95. 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 will be exempt from legislation that requires 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 paraprofessional 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 regional and seasonal needs.

Rural Hospitals

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

97. AAW supports recognizing the seasonal and regional health coverage needs of agriculture.

98. AAW supports retaining critical access hospital status for existing facilities.

Long-Term Care Security

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

100. 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 choices and offer consumers the same protections nationwide.

Education

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

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

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

104. 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.

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

106. AAW supports the teaching of our nation’s cultural, religious, social, economic and political structure; AAW opposes the use of public education to politically indoctrinate America’s children.

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 wellbeing of the world depends upon modern, progressive production capabilities and practices of U.S. agriculture.

107. 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.

108. AAW requests an independent audit of all commodity checkoffs as well as complete transparency.

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

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

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

112. 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.

113. 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.

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

COMMODITY MARKETING

115. AAW supports initiatives that promote the ability to offer forward contracts and risk mitigation tools.

CROPS

Crop Insurance

116. 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.
117. AAW supports crop insurance as a viable alternative within the Farm Program as a necessary means for global food security at an affordable cost to producers.

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

119. AAW supports the government recognizing that private insurers must preserve capital for possible future payouts to producers. We support the transparency of all crop insurance companies.

Crop Protection

120. 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.

121. AAW supports the re-registration of current fumigants and continued development of new fumigants for crop production and export opportunities.

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

123. 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.

Sections 18 and 24 are emergency pest management protocol.

124. 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.

125. 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.

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

127. 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

128. AAW supports the U.S. Department of Agriculture increasing fruits, vegetables and specialty crops for consumption in federal food programs.

129. 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.

130. 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.

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

132. AAW supports individual and cooperative efforts by producers to improve income with processing and marketing methods which add value to farm products while maintaining food safety.

Grains, Sugar & Cotton

133. AAW supports and promotes alternative uses of all grain and related by-products produced in the United States.

134. We support a national energy policy that includes a renewable fuels standard (RFS) for all transportation fuels and less dependence upon foreign oil.

135. AAW supports cotton being recognized as not only a source of fiber and feed but also as an oil.

New Crops & New Uses

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

137. 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

138. 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 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.

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

140. 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 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 of food.

141. AAW fully supports peer-reviewed published scientific studies in dietary recommendations. AAW also supports healthy eating habits, recommending a balanced daily diet of meats, dairy, fruits, whole grains and vegetables in order to support healthy living.

142. AAW supports the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) — the most sweeping reform of our nation’s food safety laws in more than 70 years — shifting focus to risk
prevention, rather than only responding to contamination, in the following areas:

- protection of food against intentional adulteration
- sanitary transportation of human and animal foods
- safety rules for produce
- foreign supplier verification
- accredited third-party certification
- preventative controls for human foods
- preventative controls for foods for animals

Implemented, these regulated programs assure consumer confidence in our national food supply and products sourced from other countries.

**LANDSCAPING, NURSERIES & GREENHOUSES**

143. 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.

144. 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.

145. 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**

146. 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.

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

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

149. AAW supports the responsible use of antibiotics and other industry-approved treatments to safeguard animal health.

150. 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.

151. AAW opposes announcements of suspect cases of infectious zoonotic diseases.

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

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

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

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

156. 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.

157. AAW supports an effective track and trace system that is cost effective to producers and enhances public confidence in the U.S. food supply.

158. 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.

159. AAW opposes implementing fines and/or prison time for anyone who sells, transports, imports or exports horses going to a humane and regulated horse processing facility.

160. AAW supports having regulations that preserve premiums for higher quality livestock yet allow individuals to prove they themselves have suffered economic damages from direct purchasers versus proving economic damages to all producers.

**Animal Well-Being**

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

162. 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.

163. AAW supports only highly qualified and uniformly trained states’ departments of agriculture employees access to properties for inspections at slaughterhouses or any other animal handling facility. AAW opposes any legislation or regulations that would allow the 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.

164. AAW respectfully asks lawmakers, 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.

165. AAW supports the responsible use of animals in research.

166. 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.

167. 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.

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

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

170. AAW supports the legalization of horse slaughter plants to guarantee the humane and environmentally sensitive disposal of abandoned, aged and infirm horses in the U.S. without excessive regulations.
171. AAW supports the sale, possession and humane transportation of horses for processing across state and international borders without excessive regulations.

172. AAW supports the use of standardized Best Management Practices (BMPs) in livestock carcase disposal.

173. AAW opposes regulations that licensed businesses sell only rescue animals.

**NATIVE POLLINATORS**

174. AAW supports strong pollinator communities, and the funding for continued research, including but not limited to, bee pests and diseases.

175. AAW supports locally-determined practices as the most beneficial means of maintaining native pollinator health.

**Natural Resources**

AAW stands firm in defending the Constitution of the United States of America and we strongly urge all members of Congress to protect the sovereignty of the United States against global governance.

AAW strongly rejects the 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 redistribution of wealth.

AAW defines “sustainable agriculture,” including silviculture, forestry, hydroponics and aquaculture, as using best management 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.

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

177. AAW supports the multiple use of natural resources.

178. AAW recommends policies that promote abundant renewable natural resources in a healthy, productive environment.

179. AAW supports the use of natural resources to produce food, clothing, shelter and fuel as a priority for the U.S. economy and national security.

180. 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 and actions. There should be:

- specific timetables,
- timely efficiency reports,
- analysis of public and private costs of implementation,
- balancing of harms and benefits using peer-reviewed science and economics, and
- analysis of the effect of no-management actions (i.e., increased loss of lives and property due to wildfires).

181. AAW supports community-oriented policing with increased training for law enforcement to understand the local agricultural practices.

**CLEAN AIR**

182. 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 peer-reviewed science as justification for the increased regulation.

183. 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;
- restrict energy production or lead to increased energy costs in rural areas.

**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).**

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

185. 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 is reevaluated.

186. AAW supports full partnership with states in listing species, defining critical habitat designations, leading recovery planning, and delisting decisions.

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

188. 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.

189. AAW supports an ESA consultation process requiring the use of peer-reviewed 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.

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

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

192. 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. AAW supports the implementation of an Endangered Species Recovery Transparency Act.

193. 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.

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

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

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

197. AAW believes ONLY native species should be considered for endangered species status in historic native habitat.

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

199. 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.

200. AAW supports an initiative of having 25% or more of the U.S. renewable energy sources being produced by farms, ranches and forests by the year 2025.

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

202. 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.

203. 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.

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

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

206. AAW supports continued research of nuclear energy and development of new plants providing there is a safe means of disposal of the nuclear waste.

207. AAW opposes moratoriums of any kind on fracturing for oil or natural gas or frac sand mining.

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 frac sand mining.

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

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

FORESTRY & 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 habitat. 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 use 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.

210. AAW urges Congress to require the Forest Service to implement their National Forest Plans by:

• increasing the timber sale program to 4 billion board feet annually and continuing to increase annual volumes until they achieve the Forest Plan levels;
• reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires and insect epidemics using timber harvest and other available tools;
• salvaging trees killed by fires and insect epidemics to reduce excessive carbon emissions;
• reducing carbon emissions from the national forests at the same rate expected of private enterprises and businesses.

211. AAW supports creating a separate fund to allow extraordinary wildfires to be treated the same as other natural disasters, changing the methods used to fund national forest fire suppression costs to:

• eliminate any need for ‘fire borrowing’;
• stop further increases in the percentage of the Forest Service’s budget designated for fire suppression;
• increase additional forest management
and fuels reduction programs as means of reducing the potential for catastrophic fires.

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.

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.

212. AAW urges Congress to expand Forest Service authorities, such as Categorical Exclusions, to ensure that national forest projects are implemented on a landscape scale.

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

Wilderness Study Areas: Lands not actually designated yet as “wilderness” are being treated in a like manner long after studies have shown these areas do not fit criteria for wilderness. These areas should be returned to multiple-use status and allow roads and trails to be maintained for access.

214. 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.

215. AAW urges the expansion of the domestic forest products market.

216. AAW urges Congress to amend the Equal Access to Justice Act, requiring full transparency and disclosure of payments, 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.

217. AAW opposes the purchase of additional federal lands considering current maintenance backlogs and inadequate management of current lands.

INVASIVE SPECIES

AAW does not view all non-native species as invasive, nuisance, noxious or harmful. It is well known that migratory flyways can and do change. Weather, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes can and do cause variations to historic ranges of species. These and other acts of nature cause relocation of species.

218. 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.

“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.

LAND USE & PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

220. 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.

221. 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.

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

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

223. 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.

224. 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

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

226. AAW supports a policy of no net loss of taxable private property, and a policy of no net loss of taxable private property and a policy of no net increase in the acreage of any national forest.

227. AAW opposes preferential treatment to sellers or buyers of private lands, water, or mineral rights through tax incentives or other measures to nonprofit entities.

228. 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 U.S. shell companies to disguise true profits.

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

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

231. AAW supports removing the President's authority to unilaterally designate national monuments, either by repeal of the Antiquities Act or by requiring prior state approval for any designation.

232. 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 2016, the National Wilderness Preservation system currently contains 762 wilderness areas comprising 109,129,659 acres. (source: wilderness.net.)

Public Land & Animal Resource Management

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

234. AAW supports active, responsible management of wildlife.

Private Property Rights

235. 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.

236. 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 viewpoints;
• activities that impact landowner rights in any way, or by endorsing conservation easements.

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

238. AAW supports a private property owner’s right to a fair appeals process prior to any fines being imposed by a government agency.

239. 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.

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

Eminent Domain

241. 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.

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

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

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

245. 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.

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

247. 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.

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

WATER RESOURCES

Water Quality

Non-Point Source

249. 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.

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

251. AAW supports the clarification by Congress that access roads on federal lands are not point-source pollution.

Data and Monitoring

252. 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.

253. 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.

254. 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

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

AAW contends that water is property (the Hage vs. United States Takings case, January 26, 2004) and therefore privately owned permitted water shall be held at the highest and best use even when the public deems it necessary a beneficial use of that water.
256. AAW urges Congress to immediately reaffirm the initial, established purpose of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The purposes of flood control, navigation and irrigation projects have served both the government and the economic development efforts of this country.

257. 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.

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

259. 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.

260. 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 peer-reviewed science 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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

261. AAW advocates policies that promote abundance of water resources and/or water storage.

262. AAW supports allowing voluntary private funds for modernization of locks and dams.

**Navigable Waters**

263. AAW demands retention of the word “navigable” in the Clean Water Act. AAW supports repeal of the EPA’s Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule.

264. AAW opposes proposed changes to the Clean Water Act that expand the 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.

265. 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.

266. 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.

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

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

269. AAW supports agriculture as the highest and best use 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 products.

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

**Wetlands**

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

272. 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.

273. 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.

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**Water Contracts, Water Rights and Ownership**

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Shining Our Lights on Agriculture in Minnesota

by Karolyn Zurn, Minnesota Agri-Women President

Shining Our Lights on Agriculture is the theme for the 2017 National Convention to be held in Bloomington, Minnesota. We are busy inviting speakers for break-out sessions and round table presentations, planning tours and making sure you enjoy your time with us.

Mark your calendars ladies for November 16-18, 2017. You can fly into the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport for easy access. The Embassy Suites in Bloomington offers spacious rooms at an affordable price that includes breakfast. The hotel has a shuttle that runs to and from the airport and to and from the Mall of America. We look forward to seeing you in November as you join us in Shining Our Lights on Agriculture.

Have a membership question? Need to update any of your information?

Contact Lisa Campion, AAW’s executive assistant, with all membership requests. You can e-mail aaw@americanagriwomen.org or call 586-530-1771. You can also write Lisa at American Agri-Women, 142 Oak Circle, Colchester, VT 05446.

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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 these dates.
- December 1 for Winter Issue
- March 15 for Spring Issue
- June 15 for Summer Issue
- September 10 for Fall Issue