

**2016-2017
NORTHWEST FARMERS UNION
POLICY AND PROGRAM**

(Original language adopted 12/13/14; last revised 10/08/16)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

NORTHWEST FARMERS UNION 2016-2017 POLICY AND PROGRAM

A. PREAMBLE

1

B. AGRICULTURAL POLICY

1

C. AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM POSITIONS

1

1. Crops

1

2. Livestock

1

3. Dairy

2

4. Pollinators

2

5. Conservation

2

6. Research

3

7. Transportation and Railroads

3

8. Farm Agricultural Credit

3

D. PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

3

1. Climate Change

3

2. Energy

3

3. Land Use

3

4. Environment

3

5. Natural Resources

3

6. Water

3

7. Wildlife

3

8. Food and Food Safety

4

9. Public Policy

4

10. Taxation

5

11. Rural Social Issues and Civil Rights

5

12. Organization Policy

5

E. ORGANIZATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

5

1. National Farmers Union

5

2. Northwest Farmers Union

5

3. Local/Area Farmers Unions

6

4. Organization Education Policy

6

F. ACTION PLANS 2016

7

1. Transportation and Railroads

7

2. Water

7

3. Industrial Hemp

7

4. Beef Checkoff Reform

7

G. 2016 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

7

Resolutions Revisions History

8

H. GLOSSARY

9

I. INDEX

9

A. PREAMBLE

Northwest Farmers Union is committed to helping ensure that family farmers and ranchers remain competitive and productive no matter the size of operation or product raised.

B. AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Keep farmers on the farm by asking Northwest Farmers Union members and Board to take the leadership in a national campaign to promote a price balance between sales and cost of farm operations.

Given the continuing loss of farmers and decline in population of rural communities in the Northwest, we support and encourage continuation of all USDA programs, that assist in the establishment of beginning farmers and ranchers. We urge full and continued funding of beginning or young farmer and rancher programs.

The following are obstacles facing beginning farmers: lack of capital, lack of access to land, the prohibitive cost of health care, access to credit, shortage of business planning and marketing skills help, a necessity for off the farm income, escalating farm values and other obstacles. Therefore, we urge lawmakers to provide legislation to create programs and remedies for reducing obstacles to beginning farmers. We support mentorship and apprenticeship programs on farms and ranches.

We oppose consolidation of farmland ownership in the hands of a few. Instead, we support a climate which will permit family-based farms to flourish, including; availability of monetary support, adequate credit opportunity, a fair trade balance and equitable profitability for agricultural producers.

We advocate and urge funding for conservation including soil, water, atmosphere and energy as a responsible economic investment in the future.

We urge full funding and staffing for FSA and NRCS in county-based offices. We oppose consolidation of county offices.

We oppose the formation and implementation of unrealistic rules and regulations that prohibit the production of food and fiber, regardless of scale.

We recognize that active participation in the political process is necessary on both the state, national and international levels to achieve equity for the agricultural industry.

C. AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM POSITIONS

We support a Farm Program that provides adequate support to the producers and that support be provided at the grassroots level.

1. Crops

We support the right of producers to save seed for their own production.

2. Livestock

We support teaching animal welfare, as opposed to animal rights, through educational

programs and agricultural organizations. We support domestic animals' access to proper food, shelter and water for survival.

We urge any foreign meats or other food stuffs entering the United States be subject to the same standards that apply to United States meats and other food stuffs.

Checkoff dollars be used to promote only livestock born, raised and processed in the United States.

Allow for checkoff expenditures to protect U.S. beef and cattle from unfair trade practices and to protect the U.S. herd from import practices, which threaten cattle herd health and beef consumers.

Recognize the serious threat of West Nile disease and urge that local governments control mosquitoes. We recommend education to the public for protection of humans and livestock against the disease.

We support USDA inspected horse slaughter facilities in the United States and encourage a facility be built in the Northwest.

3. Dairy

We support a national policy establishing an equitable floor price policy that sets a level that allows producers to earn a fair return on their milk from the marketplace.

4. Pollinators

Continue and expand research and education aimed at protecting honey bee health as well as development and enhancement of native pollinator population.

Continue collaboration with the chemical industry and pollinator industry, to provide education to growers, applicators and the public, on the harmful effects of pesticides and neonicotinoids on pollinator populations, especially related to hive losses.

Continue monitoring of pest populations, pest control methods, as well as pollinator imports and accidental importation of pests invasive species.

5. Conservation

Appropriate federal funding through appropriation and cost-share programs.

We support adequate funding for coordination of statewide weed control and nursery inspections while ensuring ongoing weed control on state and federal lands, county roadways, railroad rights-of-way and state and private lands.

Ensure ongoing weed control on state and federal lands, county roadways, railroad rights-of-way and state and private lands.

We support control of invasive species to preserve Northwest natural resources.

6. Research

7. Transportation and Railroads

We encourage establishing a coordinated national system of water, rail and air transportation that will serve both rural and urban areas at reasonable rates.

8. Farm Agricultural Credit

We support a secondary market for agricultural loans including real estate.

We support an effort to meet beginning farmers credit needs and those whose credit needs cannot be met by commercial lenders.

D. PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

1. Climate Change

We support a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend as a market-based approach to a healthy and stable climate.

2. Energy

We support research and development for alternative energy sources.

3. Land Use

We request that trespassers be held liable for any damage done to private property along public access streams.

4. Environment

We support feasible air, water, and land use standards to prevent degradation of our environment and quality of life for present and future generations.

5. Natural Resources

We oppose EPA regulation of dust produced by farmers and ranchers.

We support practical grazing practices on public land that supports good stewardship.

6. Water

We support a broad water development policy, which ensures multiple uses, recognizing the primacy of the needs of agriculture.

We urge oil and gas companies to properly treat and reuse their waste water.

7. Wildlife

We support private property rights.

We support land lessees' rights.

We urge a portion of big game hunting and fishing license fees be earmarked for county road maintenance.

We oppose any legislation banning aerial hunting, steel traps, M44's and other approved methods for control of wildlife-incurred damage.

We support the judicious use of control practices being continued on federal and state lands to control coyotes, feral hogs and other damaging species.

We recognize concerns of the impacts on agricultural lands with the potential listing of sage grouse as an endangered species.

We allow ranchers and the public to protect private property from predators that fall under the Endangered Species Act.

The Department of Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of wildlife while under the ESA and is responsible for reimbursement of livestock losses caused by said wildlife.

We support adequate support for wildlife predator control.

We support state management of wolves.

8. Food and Food Safety

Food safety policies can and should protect consumers without limiting farmers, ranchers and small food processors who sell into local and regional markets.

We urge closer control of additives, non-food substitutes, and fillers in foods which lessen nutritional value.

We support the development of local and regional food systems and infrastructure that shorten the distance between the farm and table.

We support products entering the U.S. being produced and processed under the same sanitary and phytosanitary restrictions as those imposed on American family farmers.

9. Public Policy

We recognize that there are many ethical, moral, and societal issues that are important to us as citizens, but don't relate directly to our organizational purpose. In these areas, we encourage our members to utilize, where applicable, this public philosophy when participating in the formulation of such public policy, whether individually or as a part of other groups dedicated to responsible investigation and solutions to these issues. But where public policy involves us as rural citizens and as Farmers Union members, we accept our responsibility to speak to these issues whether in the global arena, on the national scene, or in our state, cities and rural communities.

The United States enjoys the safest, highest quality, and most economical food supply in the

world. We request our state and national organizations insist that government maintain the high inspection standards for foreign vegetables, meats and food products, which apply to U.S. producers.

We encourage people to buy locally produced products.

10. Taxation

In lieu of estate tax repeal, we support estate tax relief for family-owned farms, ranches and small businesses in order to facilitate the transfer of those enterprises to the next generation.

We encourage that inheritance taxes on agricultural land be eliminated if land is passed to direct heirs and remains in agricultural use, operated by them, for at least five (5) years.

11. Rural Social Issues and Civil Rights

We support equality under law for all citizens regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability and religion.

12. Organization Policy

We believe in the benefits of a grass roots organization.

Northwest Farmers Union is non-partisan and does not endorse candidates or provide financial support; members are encouraged to participate in the activities of the political party of their choice.

To be an effective force, members must be involved in the organization. Such involvement demands communication and motivational focus from its leadership in order to accomplish its goals, to develop the talents of the membership and to foster feelings of self-worth as individuals and as a group.

We support development of programs to increase interaction of agricultural and non-agricultural groups with the purpose of achieving common goals.

E. ORGANIZATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National Farmers Union

Strengthen ties and communication with member state organizations.

We encourage membership and other organizations to explore and develop long range farm programs.

Hold conventions in states with a large rural population and with significant Farmers Union membership amenable to farmer and rancher seasonal schedules.

2. Northwest Farmers Union

We encourage Northwest Farmers Union members to run and to participate in community, state, and national activities and offices.

Implement the expansion of all facets of traditional and non-traditional membership, including associate memberships.

Hold seminars for leadership development.

We encourage coverage of agricultural information and education in Northwest media, and show appreciation when such coverage appears.

Provide an arena for dialogue among the membership and between farm organizations concerning new long-range farm programs.

Continue a positive public relations role with other organizations, groups and individuals to further the understanding of the agricultural issues.

Keep membership informed as to state and national legislative and organizational developments.

Provide non-partisan information on all candidates for public office together with judicial candidates and include voting records on issues pertinent to the Farmers Union and its policies and programs.

3. Local/Area Farmers Unions

Provide a channel for communications within the organization.

We support and continue to use social media as a channel of communication for Northwest Farmers Union news and events.

We encourage member and youth to use their talents in the Farmers Union and in civic affairs.

We support creation and expansion of active locals.

4. Organization Education Policy

An educated, involved membership is the essential ingredient in the Farmers Union if our membership participation and governance is to be effective.

We support organizational education incorporating Farmers Union philosophy as a source of renewed commitment and as a means of organizational development so that our agricultural vocation and our rural communities may benefit.

We promote programs designed to assist Northwest Farmers Union members in areas pertinent to their lives as agriculturists: economics, money creation, consumer education and the broad range of problems faced by producers and to assist improving the system of marketing.

Install a program to educate the public about the accomplishments of the American family farmer, including their high quality productivity and environmental awareness. The program is to include how the U.S. farm policy works to ensure affordable food for the entire nation

and the small part of the Ag budget the farmer receives.

We promote member attendance at conferences to educate themselves about the importance of their involvement in family farming.

Links with the other state and national groups to research and develop farm programs and policies.

Establish short-term and long-term educational goals for all age groups.

F. ACTION PLANS 2016

1. Transportation and Railroads

WHEREAS, increased oil train car traffic is potentially threatening communities and the ability for locally produced agricultural products to be distributed on the railways; and

WHEREAS, proposed building of oil refineries in the Northwest is in public debate.

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that Northwest Farmers Union supports study of rail capacity impacts of oil shipments in the Northwest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Northwest Farmers Union supports the study of impacts of new oil terminals in the Northwest.

2. Water

Northwest Farmers Union supports the protection of the waters of the Northwest for farmers' and ranchers' agricultural use.

3. Industrial Hemp

The Northwest is allowed to conduct industrial hemp research and development in States where industrial hemp has been legalized and their respective state departments of agriculture have appropriately promulgated regulations as authorized by §7606 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, to prepare for production of this widely versatile crop that provides fibers, oils, nutritious foods and animal feed, bio-fuels, biomass feedstock and other co-products; and is a good rotation crop that requires less inputs while increasing farm gate income.

4. Beef Checkoff Reform

Northwest Farmers Union does not support the Beef Checkoff.

G. 2016 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

Kent Wright, Vancouver, President, Chair

Rich Boyd, Vancouver, Vice President

Brian Helsing, Vancouver, Treasurer

Tiffany Wright, Vancouver, Secretary

Peggy Wright, St. John, Director at Large

Northwest Farmers Union 2015 Convention

October 31, 2015

Resolutions Revisions History

- Original language was adopted at the inaugural NWFU Convention on December 13, 2014
- Revisions were adopted at the NWFU Convention on October 31, 2015
- Revisions were adopted at the NWFU Convention on October 8, 2016

H.

GLOSSARY

ESA – Endangered Species Act

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FSA – Farm Service Agency

NWFU – Northwest Farmers Union

NFU – National Farmers Union

NORTHWEST - Washington, Idaho, Oregon

NRCS – Natural Resource and Conservation Service

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

I.

INDEX

	A	Climate.....1, 3
Aerial Hunting 4		Coyote 4
Agricultural Act of 2014 7		Crops 1
	B	D
Beef.....2, 7		Dairy 2
Beginning Farmers.....1, 3		E
Bio-fuels 7		Endangered Species 4
Biomass 7		Endangered Species Act (ESA) 4
	C	Energy.....1, 3
Cattle.....2, 7		Environment 3
Checkoff.....2, 7		

Environmental Protection Act
.....
3

Estate Tax
.....
5

F

Family Farmer 1, 4,
6

Family Farming
.....
6

Farm Service Agency (FSA)
.....
1

Federal Lands
.....
2

Feral Hogs
.....
4

Food Safety
.....
4

H

Hive Loss
.....
2

Honey Bee
.....
2

Horse Slaughter
.....
2

I

Industrial Hemp
.....
7

Inheritance Tax
.....
5

L

Land Use
.....
3

Livestock..... 1, 2,
4

Locally Produced Products
.....
5

M

M44's
.....
4

N

National Farmers Union (NFU)
.....
5

Natural Resource and Conservation
Service (NRCS)
.....
1

Natural Resources 2,
3

Northwest Farmers Union (NWFU) 1, 4,
5, 6, 7, 8

Nursery
.....
2

O

Oil and Gas
.....
3

Oil Refineries
.....
7

Oil Shipments
7

Oil Terminals
7

Oil Train
7

Organization Policy
5

P

Pollinator
2

Predator Control
4

Private Lands
2

Private Property3,
4

R

Railroad2, 3,
7

Railways
7

S

Sage Grouse
4

Soil
1

State Lands
4

Steel Traps
4

T

Taxation
5

Transportation3,
7

U

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)1,
2

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4

W

Water1, 2, 3,
7

Weed Control
2

West Nile Disease
2

Wildlife3,
4

Wolves
4