

POLICY RESOLUTIONS - 2017

DOMESTIC AND TRADE POLICY

Farm Policy

- NSP opposes any type of meanstesting to establish eligibility for, or restrict participation in, federal farm programs.
- NSP supports decoupled farm programs.
- NSP supports reference/target prices in farm policy.
- NSP supports the continuation of separate identity rights for spouses actively engaged in farming.
- NSP opposes further payment limitation reductions.
- NSP opposes a government-owned food security reserve or a farmer-owned reserve.

Risk Management

- NSP supports fair and equitable implementation of new insurance products so that sorghum is not at a competitive disadvantage over other crops
- NSP supports new 508h proposals for sorghum
- NSP supports a unified network programming system such as a Comprehensive Information Management System (CIMS) or a single hardcopy paper filing system between the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) for crop acreage reporting. This would eliminate a double paper acreage filing system that results in errors so long as RMA, FSA and approved insurance providers all have access to the system that is currently in place.
- NSP supports the current crop insurance programs and delivery systems
- NSP opposes linking conservation compliance to crop insurance program participation.
- NSP supports RMA maintaining zoning by state, county and practice for actuarial purposes.
- NSP supports personal T-yields.

Taxes

- NSP opposes federal taxes on agricultural inputs.
- NSP opposes imposing self employment taxes on land or machinery rent.
- NSP opposes the creation of a federal value added tax.

Taxes (continued)

- NSP supports allowing producers to transfer monies received from the sale of agricultural land or assets to tax deferred retirement accounts.
- NSP supports the use of, and encourages the IRS to allow, IRA and other producer retirement account investment in farmer-owned, value-added cooperatives.
- NSP supports a federal tax code to be made permanent to allow capital purchases of up to \$250,000 to be expensed rather than depreciated. With regards to the estate tax, NSP supports a 5 million dollar or higher exemption and a 35 percent rate with indexing.
- NSP supports the federal fuel tax exemption for bio-based fuels.
- NSP supports the extension of section 179 at the 2011 level of \$500,000 and the extension of bonus depreciation at the 2011 level of 100 percent.
- NSP supports allowing a full deduction from self-employment tax calculations for health insurance premiums paid for self-employed individuals and their families.
- NSP supports the current “cash basis” accounting policy for AG producers

Biotechnology

- NSP recognizes the important role technology plays in agriculture and sorghum’s competitiveness. These issues will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Big Data

- NSP supports all data generated by farmers under the umbrella of “big data” is exclusively owned and controlled by the individual farmer.

Immigration

- NSP supports a guest worker program that secures the borders of the United States and provides a legal, affordable and stable workforce for agriculture.

Transportation - Water

- NSP opposes all cargo preference and Jones Act requirements governing shipment of bulk commodities.

Transportation - Rail

- NSP supports requiring a 60-day notice of rail rate increases.
- NSP supports competitive access for all rail shippers.
- NSP supports giving adjacent landowners the right of first-refusal to purchase abandoned rail beds at a fair market appraised value comparable to adjacent property.
- NSP opposes any further rail mergers in the United States unless the mergers are conditioned on the offering of open access to all captive rail shippers.
- NSP supports maintenance and expansion of intermodal services for agricultural products.
- NSP encourages the STB to provide for the mediation and arbitration of service and rate disputes.

Transportation - Truck

- NSP supports giving each state the authority to regulate truck weights and urges them to standardize weight limits and bridge formulas between states.
- NSP supports passage of federal legislation that moves the agricultural exemption for hours of service from rule to law.
- NSP affirms its support of traffic safety but recognizes issues of practicality regarding farm truck safety equipment. Therefore NSP supports a production agriculture exemption to DOT regulations.
- NSP supports an increase in the mileage exemption for heavy highway vehicle use tax from 7,500 miles to 20,000 miles for agricultural vehicles.
- NSP supports exempting implements of husbandry and vehicles with farm tags from the definition of a commercial motor vehicle and from interstate commerce definitions.
- NSP urges Congress to ensure that in the implement of the U.S. Patriot Act, producers and custom harvesters retain their 150 mile exemption from their base of operations.

Transportation - Truck (continued)

- NSP supports the exemption but encourages the use of CDL licenses. NSP also supports gallon limitation requirements for custom harvesters and farm suppliers transporting inputs to and from the farm.

Farm Credit

- NSP supports financing program for beginning farmers.
- NSP supports the FSA guaranteed loan program.
- NSP supports FSA reduced interest loan program.
- NSP supports the Farmer Mac secondary Market.
- NSP supports low interest program for farmer owned cooperatives.
- NSP supports the mediation concept included in the Farm Credit Act of 1987.
- NSP opposes any restructuring of the Farm Credit System that replaces elected farmer-members of system boards with commercial bankers or expands bank access to FCS funding.
- NSP supports federal banking regulations, which account for the different needs of rural and urban banks.

Commodity Futures

- NSP supports the appointment of an agricultural producer as a CFTC commissioner.
- NSP supports continued efforts to educate producers about futures, options and other pricing alternatives and market liquidity.

General Domestic Policy

- NSP supports the continuation of USDA as a cabinet- level department and believes it should be the lead agency in all federal programs, policies or regulations affecting farmers.
- NSP believes that USDA should not include income from off-farm sources when reporting farm income.
- NSP supports greater empowerment of FSA and NRCS state and county committees to adapt national programs to local needs.

General Domestic Policy (continued)

- NSP supports the present system of electing farmers to FSA county committees rather than appointed committees.
- NSP supports input from stakeholders (farmers, ranchers, county and state committee members) before changes are considered in the USDA-FSA system to better manage services to farmers and ranchers.
- NSP encourages FSA to adequately staff FSA offices to levels that meet the needs of producers.
- NSP supports the timely appointment of all USDA committees.
- NSP supports the work of USDA Rural Development and/or other agencies to improve the quality of life and increase economic opportunity in rural America. NSP also encourages the long-term funding of the grant, loan and loan guarantee programs administered by USDA Rural Development and/or other agencies.

Trade

- NSP supports fair and open trade of sorghum throughout the world.
- NSP supports the advancement of comprehensive multilateral negotiations to expand trade in goods and services.
- NSP supports swift resolution of unfair trade practices that harm U.S. grain exports.
- NSP opposes any attempt to reopen the Sanitary Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement and believes that the SPS and technical barriers to trade agreements are sufficient to address trade of biotech products.
- NSP supports an objective, tangible monitoring system for sorghum odor.
- NSP urges international harmonization of scientific standards and trade rules.
- NSP supports legislation to normalize trade relations and travel with Cuba.
- NSP opposes any protectionist trade legislation or unilateral sanctions that restrict U.S. grain exports.

Trade (continued)

- NSP urges the U.S. Trade Representative and Foreign Ag Service to pursue aggressive enforcement of existing trade agreements.
- NSP supports eliminating barriers which restrict U.S. ag producers access to worldwide crop inputs.
- NSP supports continued monitoring of foreign and domestic compliance with multi-lateral and bi-lateral trade agreements.

Trade Promotion

- NSP supports full funding and utilization of MAP, FMD, GSM 102, export credit programs, tax credits and other promotion and marketing programs for sorghum.
- NSP supports continued legislative authorization of the cooperator program.

Food Aid

- NSP encourages the use of U.S. products for all food assistance purchased by the U.S. government except in the case of an emergency in order to meet humanitarian need.
- NSP opposes changes to foreign food aid programs that promote cash contributions rather than grain distributions to countries in need.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES POLICY

Crop Protection

- NSP supports research and development of environmentally-sound crop protection products in accordance with the goals and purposes of the Food Quality Protection Act and calls upon all federal agencies to use sound science and transparent procedures in its implementation.
- NSP supports the continued and essential use of phosphide.
- NSP supports the continued classification of anhydrous ammonia as a compressed gas and the labeling thereof.
- NSP supports federal funding for chemical disposal programs.
- NSP opposes requiring pre-notification of crop protection product application.

Crop Protection (continued)

- NSP supports federal preemption for the establishment of crop protection product use restrictions.
- NSP opposes designation of any agricultural crop production as a point source of pollution.
- NSP opposes legislation that requires pesticide application records to be made public.
- NSP opposes EPA requiring buffer zones for new or existing chemical registrations without first providing sound science to demonstrate the need for a buffer.
- NSP opposes any effort to remove the term “navigable” from the definition of “navigable waters of the United States”.
- NSP supports the repeal of EPA’s ruling on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS)
- NSP opposes any effort to expand the scope and definition of navigable waters by the EPA.
- NSP will work with coalition partners and EPA to ensure that crop protection risk assumptions and assessments reflect the most up-to-date agricultural practices.
- NSP supports the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED) process which promotes compliance of Codex tolerances for residues of crop protection product and testing and opposes the use of default assumptions and/or the cancellation of a registered product when there is not a readily available substitute.
- NSP opposes holding farmers liable when crop protection products are applied, stored, or disposed of in accordance with label instructions.
- NSP supports continuation of the Section 18 process.
- NSP encourages EPA to use NAFTA registration provisions to develop common labels and registrations for crop protection products.
- NSP supports that all pesticide removals should be based on sound science.

Crop Protection (continued)

- NSP strongly supports continuing efforts to clarify that applications of crop protection products do not constitute point sources of pollution under the Clean Water Act when applied in accordance with legally-registered EPA labels.

Conservation

- NSP supports giving local conservation districts greater authority in shaping conservation programs to the needs of the local community.
- NSP supports the continuation of state and regional producer advisory committees to provide guidance to NRCS programs.
- NSP supports continued funding for conservation cost-share programs.
- NSP supports resolution of all conservation compliance appeals and the issuing of all “good faith” conservation variances by local county FSA committees.
- NSP supports that the funding of conservation programs must be separate and in addition to the funding of a commodity support program.
- NSP believes all conservation programs should be production-based and not land retirement-based.
- NSP believes that production agriculture should maintain a majority membership on state technical committees, advisory boards and working groups. We encourage all states to make this a priority.
- NSP supports payment eligibility requirements that are recognized by FSA also be accepted by NRCS for all NRCS programs.
- NSP encourages NRCS to follow the service mandate under which they were established to help producers voluntarily improve the conservation on their private lands.
- NSP opposes permanent conservation easements which retire productive agricultural land.

Specific Conservation Programs

- NSP supports preserving and restoring original crop base acres previously enrolled in CRP at the conclusion of such contracts.
- NSP supports limiting CRP contract rentals to the average county rental rate.
- NSP opposes the use of any CRP rent determination that encourages the enrollment of highly productive land over that of highly erodible, marginal or environmentally sensitive lands because of price.
- NSP supports landowner retention of cropland designation and property rights when the CRP contract expires.
- NSP opposes any future CRP sign-up requiring the forfeiture of water rights.
- NSP supports laws and regulations that allow Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) funds to be used to implement conservation.
- NSP supports reducing the CRP acreage cap through market-based approaches such as rental rates and flexibility of use, allowing contracts to expire on schedule. Enrollment or reenrollment of acres should be prioritized using the environmental benefit index, the highly erodible land designation, consideration of soil type indicators and competitive bidding for re-enrollment.
- NSP supports uniformity in CRP regulations across state and county borders.
- NSP supports giving NRCS (rather than the Army Corps of Engineers) primary jurisdiction over all government decisions impacting wetlands on private property.

Water and Air Quality

- NSP opposes any requirement for water quality monitoring as a criterion for farm program eligibility.
- NSP opposes mandatory nutrient management.
- NSP opposes the use of any federally mandated total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirements.
- NSP supports the current PM 10 standards.
- NSP supports the existing ozone standards.

Water and Air Quality (continued)

- NSP opposes federal agencies interfering with the use of privately held water, to the extent of non use, by individuals including those holding an authorized water right.
- NSP opposes EPA classifying the application of fertilizers and pesticides as point sources for water quality.
- NSP favors a reasonable threshold level for agricultural operations of farm fuel and oil-based product storage from any spill and containment regulation.

Endangered Species

- NSP opposes the listing of prairie dogs, lesser prairie chicken, and sage grouse as endangered species.
- NSP opposes the listing of any species if the listing may have significant negative economic consequences for sorghum farmers.

Biofuels

- NSP supports expanded use of the renewable portfolio standards.
- NSP supports the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and the development of the E-15.
- NSP supports allowing “smaller producer tax credits”.
- NSP supports federal funding for Flex Pumps.
- NSP supports the installation and use of blender pumps to allow consumers to use blends containing levels of ethanol ranging from E10 to E85 as they choose and as allowed by law.
- NSP supports the exploration of biobutanol as a new value-added transportation fuel product.
- NSP supports an Energy Title in the Farm Bill.
- NSP supports approval of sorghum oil, sweet and biomass sorghum pathways.

Research

- NSP supports federal funding of research to improve the profitability of sorghum production.
- NSP supports the USAID funding of the Sorghum and Millet Innovation Lab (SMIL) at Kansas State
- NSP supports the United Sorghum Checkoff Program and commends its board of directors for their work to improve sorghum.