



2012 Legislative Agriculture Chairs Summit

Resolution in Support of a Comprehensive 2012 Farm Bill

- Whereas,** the State Ag and Rural Leaders, (SARL) is comprised of agriculture and rural leaders of state and provincial legislative bodies from the US and Canada; and
- Whereas,** as local leaders these members have a unique understand the challenges and opportunities facing rural communities and businesses across both countries; and
- Whereas,** the Congress of the United States has begun to craft the next multi-year Farm Bill; and
- Whereas,** the decisions made in developing policy in this bill will affect all citizens – consumers and producers for many generations and impact the ability of the United States to provide food and jobs for its citizens; and
- Whereas,** agricultural producers across the nation face radically different conditions and factors of production; and
- Whereas,** differences in climate, transportation, feed, energy costs and land values compound those regional differences; and
- Whereas,** US agriculture production is a unique and diversified industry providing a wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy and fiber products to local, national consumers and export markets; and
- Whereas,** agricultural continues to be the driving force of commerce, employment and income in the rural America, accounting for sales in excess of \$3.5 trillion dollars in 2011 more than 20% (21 million) of all U.S. jobs; and
- Whereas,** the US has some of the highest water and soil quality standards in the world designed to keep its farmland healthy for future generations; and
- Whereas,** agriculture is the keystone of rural America, supporting the critical mass of infrastructure and economic activity upon which nearly all other enterprises depend; and
- Whereas,** United States energy security is dependent upon creative solutions from every region and size of producer; and
- Whereas,** a fair and equitable Farm Bill not only outlines policy for the entire United States with its diverse populations, climates, agriculture production and practices; but also respects the regional differences and unique challenges facing farmers in all parts of the country; and
- Whereas,** the states and territories of the United States are well equipped to implement farm policy and block grants within their jurisdictions as best meets the needs of the shared constituencies; and now therefore be it

Resolved, that SARL urge you, our federal policy leaders, to develop a farm bill that is beneficial to agricultural producers from all regions of the country and includes comprehensive programs for dairy, nutrition, energy, research and development, market development and specialty crops; and be it further

Resolved, that the 2012 Farm Bill, which support the opportunities of and addresses the challenges of agriculture must include the following:

- a sound dairy policy addressing the varied needs of the industry across the US; and
- opportunities to increase the availability of fresh, local foods to citizens through the creative use of and adequate funding for, Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, Farm to School programs, and innovative efforts to address food insecurity; and
- provisions for regional farm viability and farm economic development, continuing to develop and improve crop insurance availability to specialty crops, forage and livestock producers in a whole farm manner; and
- protection of the land base for agriculture, including small, high value acreages; and
- an agriculture jobs and business development package that includes increased funds for existing agricultural marketing programs, funding for new value added and infrastructure programs and increase equity funding for agriculture; and
- comprehensive programs and adequate funding for voluntary agricultural conservation programs on private land where conservation assistance funding is critical, to assist farmers complying with the highest water and soil quality standards in the world; and
- increase conservation technical assistance funding, modify existing conservation programs to allow for the support of traditional agricultural practices, continue the regional equity begun in 2002 and allow regional flexibility and;
- the creation of innovative partnerships between the federal and state governments setting aside a significant amount of funding for each region as block grants to the states for locally driven solutions; and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all members of Congress serving on the Senate and House Agriculture, Appropriations and Judiciary committees, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; and to the governors and legislative leaders of the United States and territories.

*Approved by members of State Agriculture and Rural Leaders
Legislative Agriculture Chairs Summit
January 8, 2012 - Arlington, Virginia*