

AP - 2007 Farm Bill

2006

Guiding Principles in regards to the formulation of the 2007 Farm Bill

This statement will guide NCBA's actions on behalf of the cattle industry in influencing the formulation of the 2007 Farm Bill.

Under this statement, NCBA's priorities are to:

1. Achieve a reduction in federal agriculture program spending and the deficit;
2. Minimize direct federal involvement in agriculture;
3. Preserve the right of individual choice in the management of land, water and other resources;
4. Provide an opportunity to compete in foreign markets; and
5. Oppose farm policy which favors one producer or commodity over another.

Natural Resource Policy

Government policy should enhance the individual's right of free choice in land use, soil conservation, water conservation, energy use, and development utilizing working lands conservation methods that are based on sound science and economics.

State laws and individual private rights should be preeminent in the use of water and other natural resources.

To accomplish our priorities we suggest the following:

1. Eliminate overlap or redundancy in current programs.
2. Improve efficiency of existing programs.

Marketing Policy

National agricultural policy should be based on a free, private enterprise, competitive market system. We support a producer's ability to market his or her cattle however, whenever, and to whomever he or she wants.

Farm policy should be discouraged which:

1. Guarantees profit,
2. Restricts the operation of the competitive marketplace, or
3. Dictates who can or can't own cattle.

Private enterprise alternatives in marketing and risk management should be developed and encouraged as the preferred alternative to government programs.

Commodity Programs Policy

The principal focus of national farm policy should be to promote a free market, private enterprise farm economy.

Any government programs which would have a substantial negative effect on cattlemen need to be opposed and prevented.

Any commodity program must include thorough consideration of the impact of subsidies and guarantees for given commodities on other commodity sectors and on domestic and foreign markets before the program is adopted. Recognizing the high-degree of government intervention in agriculture and the potential economic disruption of an immediate end to commodity programs, NCBA supports a transition or phase-out period for programs that may be eliminated.

It is not in the national, farm or individual producer interest to vest the government with authority to:

1. Set prices,
2. Underwrite inefficient production, or
3. Manipulate domestic supply, demand, cost, or price.

NCBA strongly opposes direct cash payments to any segment of the livestock industry for the purpose of offsetting low market prices.

Nutrition Programs

USDA should maintain the preeminent role in establishing the nutrition policy for the federal government and providing proper nutrition, food security, research, and education for America.

Credit Programs

Federal agriculture policy should encourage the availability of capital to farmers and ranchers at competitive rates to maintain a healthy business environment, resulting in the continued viability of agricultural operations.

Trade Policy

Ninety six percent of the world's consumers reside outside U.S. borders. NCBA recognizes that the growth and profitability of the U.S. cattle and beef industry is closely tied to our ability to market our products to those consumers. We support international trade policies that aggressively pursue expanded market access for U.S. beef, enforce trade agreements that are based on internationally recognized standards and guidelines, and hold our trading partners accountable for their international trade commitments.

We support the modification of market promotion programs to meet the current and future marketing trends and opportunities in the worldwide beef marketplace.

Research Funding

Research in animal diseases, economic, production practices, nutrition, food safety, environmental impacts, and the impact of environmentally sensitive lands and species on agricultural operations is a critical component in advancing animal agriculture. Increased investment in this type of research is vital to the security and viability of our agriculture industry and food supply.

Energy Policy

Recognizing the value and growth of renewable fuels, cattle producers need the ability to monitor and evaluate any renewable fuel source that is based on agricultural commodities, waste, and/or byproducts to determine the potential effects on the marketplace and the profitability of cattle producers.

Disaster Assistance

Disaster assistance should be considered on a case by case basis with the primary focus of protecting the economic viability of the U.S. cowherd and further providing for appropriate assistance for stocker and feeder needs.

The beef industry should work with government and the private sector to develop public/private programs that help producers deal with the effects of disasters and emergencies in a more effective and timely manner.

In the case of a bioterrorism event or animal health emergency, we recommend that the existing programs in place to indemnify cattle losses be modernized and based on pre-event market conditions.

Animal Activism

Animal agriculture is based on humane care for cattle, horses, and other livestock, and the Farm Bill should not be a platform for extremist organizations to push their anti-meat/anti-agriculture agendas on American ranchers and consumers.

Animal Identification

NCBA supports the efforts of the U.S. Animal Identification Organization (USAIO) to continue to build an animal movement tracking database operated by private industry. However, we will oppose any effort by a government entity to create a public database that is duplicative of the private effort of USAIO.