



## 83<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

### **Special Orders of Business for 2025**

Special Orders of Business approved at the 2024 Annual Convention for action in 2025 include:

1. Passing a Farm Bill and Funding Agriculture Programs
2. Ensuring Affordable and Accessible Care
3. Promoting Land Ownership and Access
4. Supporting Cooperatives
5. Ensuring Fair Markets
6. Opposing Project 2025

# Passing a Farm Bill and Funding Agriculture Programs

**Whereas** everyone needs to eat, and otherwise relies on agriculture every day.

**Whereas** agriculture drives as much as one fifth of Minnesota's economy, generating \$112 billion in direct economic impact and 430,000 jobs.

**Whereas** the budget for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the Agriculture Utilization Research Institute (AURI), the Board of Animal Health, and other agriculture programs makes up less than one half of one percent of the state's overall budget.

**Whereas** Minnesota's agriculture programs deliver, helping respond to emerging animal diseases, open new market channels, promote sustainability, buck national trends by growing the number of new farmers in agriculture, and otherwise build an agriculture economy that is distributed, resilient, and fair.

**Therefore, be it resolved** that MFU supports growing our state's investment in agriculture, including by but not limited to:

- 1) Fully addressing the shortfall in Minnesota's Agriculture, Growth, Research and Investment (AGRI) program, which supports the state's work on farm to school, biofuels infrastructure, meat processing, urban agriculture, livestock investment, county fairs, and more.
- 2) Expanding Minnesota Grown, farm to kids initiatives, farmers markets, food hubs, and other initiatives that enable farmers to access new, local markets.
- 3) Growing investments in local agricultural processing, including for meat, poultry, dairy, small grains, oilseeds, hemp, wool, and other products.
- 4) Supporting farmers markets, food hubs, and other direct-market entities that enable farmers to access new markets.
- 5) Expanding programs that help farmers become more resilient to the effects of climate change, like Soil Health Financial Assistance Grants, the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP).
- 6) Growing investments in beginning farmers, including by fully funding the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, growing grant programs, and continuing to expand technical assistance.

**And whereas** the federal Farm Bill provides the foundation for United States food and agriculture policy, and an extension of the 2018 Farm Bill expired in September of 2024.

**Now therefore be it resolved** that MFU supports passing a comprehensive Farm Bill that includes:

- 1) A competition title, outlining USDA's role in ensuring transparency, enforcing antitrust law, and diversifying markets for processing, inputs, and farm equipment.
- 2) A strengthened farm safety net and emergency disaster assistance, reflecting higher input costs and puts limits on farm payments to corporate and investor owners.
- 3) Investments to help farmers implement voluntary practices that mitigate and adapt to climate change, including on-farm renewable energy, soil health, and working lands conservation.
- 4) Improved access to programs, credit, and technical assistance for beginning and emerging farmers.
- 5) Support for publicly funded research on new crop varieties, disease resistance, animal health, and other initiatives that help family farms diversify and remain resilient.
- 6) Maintained and expanded funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), school meals, and other programs that address hunger.

## Ensuring Affordable and Accessible Care

**Whereas** access to affordable care—from childcare, to preventative healthcare, to elder care—is basic to human dignity, economic opportunity, the flourishing of our communities, and the persistence of the family farm.

**Whereas** care of all kinds is too expensive, and this hits farmers and their families hard, creating economic hardship, unnecessary risk, and narrowing opportunities for the next generation.

**Whereas** healthcare premium hikes are anticipated in 2025 with the expiration of federal tax credits and other investments in the individual market.

**Now therefore be it resolved** that MFU calls on policymakers to build on their work to control the cost healthcare costs for farmers, small businesses, and others across the state including by:

- 1) Implementing a strong, affordable Public Option that allows farmers and others to ‘buy in’ to the state’s MinnesotaCare program which covers medical, dental, and mental health, and other services at affordable rates.
- 2) Structuring current and future programs in a way that creates a path toward universal, single-payer healthcare.
- 3) Taking steps to cap costs for those with insurance, including those who find they’re seeking care out-of-network.
- 4) Opposing the privatization of Medicare.
- 5) Moving to direct payment to healthcare providers and institutional providers and removing the private health insurance industry from our public programs, specifically Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare.
- 6) Support independent pharmacies across Minnesota by removing the role of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs).

**And whereas** your ability to survive an accident or medical emergency should not depend on your zip code.

Be it further resolved that Minnesota invest in Emergency Medical Services, ensuring adequate response times across our state.

**And whereas** the cost of childcare has skyrocketed to a point that is unsustainable for young families, making it harder for them to farm, remain in the workforce, and otherwise build a life in rural Minnesota.

**Be it further resolved** that MFU calls on policymakers to ensure that every community can access quality affordable childcare, including through cost sharing for families, state bonding for facilities, and financial assistance for new daycares.

**And whereas** the population in rural Minnesota is aging at the same time that nursing homes are closing across our state.

**Be it further resolved** that MFU calls on policymakers to offer protections for seniors and families effected by nursing home closures, invest in staffing and support for facilities, and investigate the role of private equity in nursing and across our healthcare system.

## Promoting Land Ownership and Access

**Whereas** farmland is an irreplaceable resource, a basic source of wealth, and is necessary to our individual survival and the flourishing of our communities.

**Whereas** farmland is best stewarded by farmers. Owning farmland allows farmers to build generational wealth and make long-term investments in the health of their soil, farm infrastructure, and other changes that improve production, promote biodiversity, and create climate resilience. Ownership also encourages farmers to invest in their local community.

**Whereas** investors and non-farm interests are purchasing farmland in Minnesota and across the country. Some companies are even advertising non-farmer investment in farmland as an alternative to the stock market, claiming better returns.

**Whereas** new and established farmers alike are being priced out of the land they need to start and sustain their operations. The cost of farmland continues to climb, with some county averages jumping more than 25 percent in 2022 alone.

**Whereas** the consolidation of farmland—along with corporate consolidation across our economy—is a threat to America’s national security and sovereignty, particularly when ownership is transferred to entities abroad.

**Now therefore be it resolved** that lawmakers on the state and federal level promote land ownership and access by farmers working the land, including by:

- 1) Improving access to credit for beginning farmers, making Farm Credit and Rural Finance Authority loans more accessible and competitive for all farmers.
- 2) Continuing to expand tax benefits for owner-operators, like the Ag Homestead Credit, including by allowing farmers cultivating less than 10 acres to qualify.
- 3) Expanding Minnesota’s nation-leading Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, to incentivize the sale of land and other assets to new farmers.
- 4) Support strong and transparent enforcement of Minnesota’s Corporate Farm Law.
- 5) Eliminating incentives or policies—including taxes and zoning regulations—that encourage or allow corporate interests or non-farm investors to purchase farmland or promote excessive consolidation.
- 6) Support farmland navigators, Farm Business Management, the Emerging Farmers Office and other initiatives aimed at helping farmers access land and build sustainable and profitable farm businesses.

**Be it further resolved** that in addition to promoting land access and ownership, we support investing in diverse distributed market opportunities, public research, supply chain development, and technical assistance that will allow new farmers to build sustainable and profitable farm businesses and remain on the land.

**Be it further resolved** that we support strong enforcement of federal and state antitrust laws along with other measures that will promote fair competition across our economy.

## Supporting Cooperatives

**Whereas** cooperation among farmers and all people is a core, founding principle of our organization. National Farmers Union was founded in 1902 as the Farmers Educational Cooperative Union of America.

**Whereas** agricultural cooperatives help level the playing field for farmers, providing opportunities for farmer members to market and process their farm products, secure inputs, and improve their operations through education.

**Whereas** nearly one in three Americans are co-op members, reflecting the diversity and versatility of the cooperative business model. Minnesota is home to cooperatives made up of farmers, retail and manufacturing workers, consumers, manufactured homeowners, and others across industries from agriculture, to banking, to healthcare. An even larger proportion of rural Minnesotans are cooperative owners through their Rural Electric Associations.

**Whereas** our economy continues to become more consolidated and our democracy more embattled. Cooperatives provide a model of distributed, democratic ownership that keeps profits local, promotes engagement with community, and solves problems for people.

**Whereas** United Nations General Assembly named 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives under the theme “Cooperatives Build a Better World.”

**Therefore, be it resolved** that MFU supports cooperatives and their past, present, and future role in creating an economy that is more distributed, resilient, and fair. We support:

- 1) Expanding state and federal support for cooperative development, including the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Development Grants and the United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program.
- 2) Expanding and creating new programs and incentives that foster local and cooperative ownership of agricultural processing, renewable energy, and farm inputs, including green fertilizer.
- 3) Investing in technical assistance, feasibility studies, and other support for emerging cooperatives.
- 4) Maintaining and expanding tax incentives for cooperative ownership.
- 5) Expanding Minnesota Rural Finance Authority programs that help enable patrons to purchase equity in cooperatives.
- 6) Maintaining the cooperative structure of the Farm Credit System.
- 7) Investing in education about cooperatives and their role in our communities.
- 8) Creating a cooperative to own and manage the Minnesota Twins.

**And be it further resolved** that Minnesota Farmers Union join with other agriculture organizations and cooperatives across sectors of our economy to celebrate the United Nation’s International Year of Cooperatives, educating the public about important role that cooperatives play in creating a better world.

## Ensuring Fair Markets

**Whereas** farmers deserve a fair price for their work to feed, clothe, and fuel our communities, our nation, and world.

**Whereas** a trade war could prove devastating for farmers and our rural economy, particularly when farmers are already facing steep input costs and thinning margins.

**Whereas** the economic impacts of a trade war are not only felt by farmers who rely on international markets, but also cooperatives, contractors, repair shops, and other main street businesses that are affected by fewer dollars circulating in rural communities.

**Therefore, be it resolved** that Minnesota Farmers Union strongly opposes tariffs that negatively affect family farms and rural communities. We call on the incoming administration to work towards commonsense international trade agreements that honor existing relationships and provide stability for farmers and the agricultural economy.

**Whereas** the consolidation of input suppliers and markets farmers rely on has resulted in the farmers' share of every dollar spent on food declining from nearly 50 cents in 1952 to less than 15 cents today, the lowest on record.

**Whereas** consolidation is pervasive and growing, and limits rural economic vitality, stifles innovation and entrepreneurship, drives down wages and otherwise limits people's voices in our economy and democracy.

**Therefore, be it resolved that MFU** calls on policymakers to take meaningful steps to curb monopoly power and protect competition. We support the appointment of agency leaders that will aggressively enforce antitrust and other antimonopoly laws such as the Packers and Stockyards Act.

**Be it further resolved** that MFU calls on policymakers to enact reforms that will strengthen our antitrust laws and promote competition, including a Right to Repair law that creates a more competitive market for the repair of farm equipment including tractors and combines.

**Be it further resolved** that MFU supports investing in key state and federal antitrust agencies, so they can bring cases against large, multinational companies abusing their market power.

# Opposing Project 2025

**Whereas** the Heritage Foundation published the Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project which is aimed at providing a blueprint for a future conservative presidency.

**Whereas** though politicians have distanced themselves from the plan, Heritage’s work has been “highly influential for presidential administrations since the Reagan era.” According to their website, the “Trump administration relied heavily” on their previous recommendations “embracing nearly two-thirds of Heritage’s proposals within just one year in office.”

**Whereas** Project 2025 calls on the next President and Congress to:

- Repeal Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and cut support for crop insurance, which serve as an important safety-net for many farmers.
- Repeal the federal sugar program, which is important to Minnesota and helps provide a stable market for sugar beet farmers.
- Eliminate the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which many farmers participate in and helps protect marginal and highly erodible lands.
- Remove nutrition programs from the Farm Bill, which is a historic and important partnership that allows the package to earn broad support in Congress.
- Eliminate investments in climate resilience, including those in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- Eliminate check-off programs.
- Repeal USDA Market Access Program, that helps develop trading partnerships.
- Revoke USDA’s authority to use the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to respond to challenges in agriculture.
- Reject efforts to expand school meals.
- Roll back existing healthcare rights and individuals’ human rights as it relates to discrimination.
- Establish widespread tariffs on numerous U.S. imports.

**Whereas** Project 2025 is broadly aimed at cutting personnel at the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development, and across the Federal government at a time when local offices are struggling to retain staff and Farmers Union has advocated for increased staffing.

**Whereas** these ideas not only come at a time when Congress is debating the next Farm Bill, but also when many producers are facing low prices and relying on a strong safety-net.

**Whereas** other parts of Project 2025—like moves to further privatize Medicare or remove the federal government’s ability to negotiate prescription drugs—would harm rural Minnesotans.

**Whereas** we oppose discrimination on women’s, LGBTQIA+, and immigrant rights.

**Therefore be it resolved** that Minnesota Farmers Union strongly opposes Project 2025 in its entirety and specifically as it relates to proposals for agriculture and rural America. We call on this and future administrations to reject these proposals in favor of policies that support farmers and build a rural economy that is distributed, resilient, and fair.