

WISCONSIN CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION - 2016 RESOLUTIONS

1. Renewable Fuels in Wisconsin

We support higher blends in Wisconsin, national efforts to use 15% ethanol blends in regular cars and continuing promotion of E-85. We strongly support the Renewable Fuel Standard for biofuels and support the statutory RVO levels of RFS 2.

For consumer and environmental benefits from the increased use of higher octane motor fuel, we support the removal of regulatory market barriers on the use of higher blends of ethanol.

2. Waters of the United States (WOTUS)

We oppose EPA's attempts to administratively interpret the Clean Water Act leading to an expanded definition of the Waters of the United States.

3. High Capacity Wells

We support regulatory certainty so as not to restrict the permitting of new or replacement wells for agricultural uses. We support streamlining the well permit application process so that applications are processed within 60 days.

4. Soil Conservation

Wisconsin farmers are increasingly adopting reduced tillage and cover crops. Because conservation of our natural resources is in everyone's best interest, the WCGA encourages farmers to update and follow their farm conservation plan to continue the trend of improving soil stewardship.

5. Responsible Nutrient Management

We support the intent of current nonpoint pollution regulations and urge that continued enforcement and rules be based on a common sense approach to maintaining and increasing Wisconsin livestock agriculture. We support reasonable nutrient management rules that include farmer input on regulations and implementation.

6. Transportation

We support adequate funding of the state and federal transportation budgets. We support reasonable rules and regulations regarding implements of husbandry that recognize the importance of modern agricultural equipment. We oppose charging farmers for use, maintenance and upgrading on local roads not designed or maintained for modern agriculture equipment. We oppose improper application of road damage statutes. We support maintaining the current system of permits for overweight containers and harvest exemptions. We support improving and replacing parts of the aging Mississippi River lock and dam system.

7. ACCP & ACM Funds

We support discontinuing the Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program and Agrichemical Management funds, fees, and taxes. We support a four-year fee holiday (as proposed by DATCP).

8. Fertilizer Research

We support a separate and expanded fund for fertilizer research.

9. Use Value Assessment of Farmland

We support efforts to protect Use Value Assessment of agricultural lands as vital to the economic viability of Wisconsin agriculture.

10. Atrazine

Atrazine has been used and tested for over 50 years and has been proven to be a safe and effective herbicide. Wisconsin rules need to be changed so that they no longer put our state growers at a disadvantage to growers in other states. Based on sound science, farmland should be released from prohibition areas.

11. Future Planning & Funding

We resolve to support all stakeholders in efforts to increase or maintain funding of the Foreign Market Development (FMD) and Market Access Program (MAP) funds to insure the continued growth of the international corn market through the efforts of the U.S. Grains Council.

2015 CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

I. ENVIRONMENTAL

A. Atrazine

Atrazine has been shown to be a safe, efficient crop protection product and has been used and tested for over 50 years. Any new rules on its use should be science based. We oppose further restrictions in Wisconsin and demand that areas that have tested atrazine free for years should be released from atrazine restriction areas as Wisconsin has become a disadvantaged island.

B. Wetlands

We support the changes made to Wisconsin's wetland rule. Wisconsin farmers should be allowed to maintain existing drainage structures and make repairs and improvements to drainage systems as necessary. Exemptions from wetland protection should be allowed for lands cropped or considered cropped six out of ten years or converted to agricultural uses prior to December 23, 1985. Proper compensation should be provided to property owners if wetlands protection results in an economic loss on a parcel of land. Mitigation should be allowed on a one to one basis.

C. Wildlife Control

WCGA members are located from the WI north woods to the Corn Belt, so for close control of wildlife numbers, the farmers whose crops feed these animals should be given the rights of harvesting them. Deer, turkeys, bears, sand hill cranes and other wild animals are causing large amounts of crop damage and farmers should be compensated for their crop losses. We would support a hunting season on sand hill cranes to make the crop damage they do eligible for compensation. We support efforts to maintain state management of wolves in Wisconsin.

D. Point Source Monitoring

Because of Conservation practices and buffer strips used by farmers as well as precision application of nutrients, farmers are not contributing to runoff problem at the levels projected by EPA statements. The state and federal government should monitor point source discharge of municipalities and industrial sources and residential fertilizer use and discharge that goes into the watershed of the Mississippi and Great Lakes.

E. ACM and ACCP Funds

The ACM and ACCP funds should be abolished. The continued raiding of the funds and the minimal need no longer justifies their continuation.

F. Pesticide and Fertilizer Storage Rules

Pesticide and fertilizer storage rules for on farm storage need to be workable and practical for farmers.

G. Move DNR Rules

We support moving the rules regarding confined animal feeding operations from DNR to DATCP.

H. DNR Board

Because farmers own much of Wisconsin's land and are greatly impacted by DNR actions, we support the requirement that at least one member of the DNR Board be a farmer.

I. Nutrient Management Plans

We support allowing farmers who have received training the right to write their own nutrient management plans. We need federal, state and county agencies to be uniform in application of these standardized plans. We support education and funding assistance to aid producers in writing their own plans.

J. Stewardship Land

We support the immediate ceasing of using Stewardship funds for land purchases until the Stewardship Land currently owned is paid in full. We further urge that tillable land now owned by the DNR be put back into production as agricultural land and that rental monies help reduce the debt of Wisconsin's Stewardship fund.

K. Ozone

We oppose EPA efforts to lower the ozone standard which would adversely affect ethanol production and use.

L. Run Off Fees.

In some areas run off fees have been proposed on buildings. Farmers should get credits to offset the fees based on acreages of permeable land.

M. Non-point phosphorous trading

Projects involving non-point phosphorous trading should only be conducted with the voluntary participation of the farmer.

N. EPA

We oppose the proposed EPA changes to the rules of certification for pesticide applicators.

O. Producer Funded Watershed Projects

We support the state initiative to create and fund producer-led watershed projects.

II. VALUE ADDED

A. Livestock Industry

The livestock industry is of primary importance in Wisconsin. WCGA should work closely with the livestock industry to research and publicize the most efficient and profitable ways to utilize valuable distiller's grains in livestock rations.

B. Corn Checkoff Program

WCGA strongly supports the checkoff as a positive force in the Wisconsin corn industry.

C. Biodegradable Plastics

The use of non-biodegradable plastics adds to environmental and landfill problems. Because landfills are a proven source of pollution, we believe that every effort should be made to use corn based biodegradable plastic materials wherever possible and that recycling should be a part of solid waste management

D. Ethanol

We support state and national efforts to use higher ethanol blends and continuing promotion of E-85. We applaud the use of ethanol blends by NASCAR and Wisconsin motor sports. We strongly support the Renewable Fuel Standard and oppose any modifications of the RFS.

III. ON FARM ISSUES

A. Working Lands Initiative

We support the objectives of the Working Lands Initiative (formerly called the Farmland Preservation Credit) to preserve farmland.

B. Right to Farm

WCGA supports a stronger statute to both protect our farmers and preserve Wisconsin's resources for the production of food and fiber especially as it pertains to Smart Growth planning. We support the legislative efforts of agricultural groups to allow siting of larger farms in agriculturally zoned areas or areas without zoning, with state standards for regulation, and to encourage agricultural livestock operations, which are a large market for corn and corn products. We support the current livestock siting rules.

C. Alien Land Ownership

We oppose efforts to allow unrestricted foreign ownership of Wisconsin farm land.

D. Wisconsin Agricultural Producer Security Fund

We support elimination of the state indemnity fund, but continue to support state licensing and auditing of grain dealers.

IV. TECHNOLOGY

A. We support the commercial release of biotech corn hybrids or products that have been fully approved by the relevant

U.S. agencies and the agencies of major importing countries and for which the product registrant is aggressively pursuing approval in every country or bloc that requires approval prior to importation of corn, corn products, or food containing corn ingredients.

- B. Recognizing the importance of every customer of U.S. corn and corn products, WCGA insists that every product registrant conducts due diligence in bringing products to market in a manner that does not disrupt domestic or international trade and encourages discussions with biotech providers and end users to develop a certified marketing system that assures all events and products will reach appropriate markets.
- C. We support regulatory systems based on sound science.
- D. We oppose any state or local mandates to label food as genetically modified.
- E. Modern agronomy tools accumulate a massive amount of information. We support farmers maintaining the ownership and control of the information generated on their operations. We support efforts to change federal regulations to allow farmers to make use of UAVs.

V. TRANSPORTATION

- A. WCGA supports adequate river water levels and renovation and maintenance of the 80-year-old “Lock and Dam” system of the Mississippi River way. A working lock and dam system is necessary for the WI farmer to remain competitive in a global market. A modern Lock and Dam system is crucial for exports. Since a significant portion of Wisconsin corn and corn products are exported from the state, we are concerned that an inefficient Lock and Dam system translates to millions of dollars lost to the Wisconsin economy. We are further concerned because 60% of the upriver traffic on the Mississippi is for farm inputs. It is time to update the Lock and Dam system.
- B. WCGA supports accessible rail transportation for the nation as this impacts a grain farmer by affecting grain prices that the WI corn farmer receives. Dependable and reliable rail transportation is critical for the state’s ethanol industry, and the Wisconsin rail industry needs to expand and improve service. We encourage the Surface Transportation Board to take action to increase access and service for rail users.
- C. WCGA supports repeal of Federal Maritime Regulation requiring that the mode of water borne transportation for export of US grain be on a US vessel under the Jones Act. Current mandates do not allow access to least cost alternatives.
- D. We support having the DOT use roundabouts only when necessary and that all roundabouts are of a standard design that allows easy use by large trucks and large farm equipment.
- E. SMV signs are an important part of highway safety for farmers and we support enforcing the law so they are not misused and their safety value is lessened.

VI. TAXATION

A. Real Estate Taxation

We commend the State of Wisconsin for full implementation of use value assessment. We continue to believe that school funding should come from residential dwellings, including farm homes, and that 2/3rds of the funding should continue to come from state taxes including income and sales taxes. Use value assessment should be extended to include non-crop farmland and waste land that is part of a farm operation. We advocate keeping local assessors rather than having county assessors.

B. Capital Gains

WCGA supports indexing for inflation of capital gains. Farmers should be able to defer capital gains taxation by rolling receipts from farm assets sales to a IRA, therefore deferring taxes until the farmer or spouse begins withdrawing funds from the IRA during retirement.

C. Sales Taxes

We oppose efforts to expand the sales tax to items needed by the family farm business that have traditionally been exempt.

D. Inheritance Tax

We oppose the inheritance tax because agriculture is a capital intensive business and the death tax impedes family and generational transfers.

E. Section 179

We encourage making Section 179 of the tax code permanent at today's level, indexed for inflation.

VII. EDUCATION

A. Ag Classes

We support having agricultural classes as part of the curriculum for Wisconsin schools. We encourage all school districts to utilize agricultural classes as part of the science curriculum credits. We urge revision of teacher certification to have a dual agriculture/science degree for Ag education majors in Wisconsin.

B. Discovery Farms

We support the proven, real world hands on research being done by Discovery Farms as a way to ground truth some of the proposals affecting agricultural producers.

C. Ag in the Classroom

We support more education on modern agriculture and food production at the elementary and secondary levels.

D. Ag Research

We support increasing the funding for agricultural research. We favor biotech research that is properly monitored for reasonable safety and with social and economic standards being followed prior to and during implementation of the research.

Wisconsin Research Institutions and UW Extension should increase collaboration with each other and with other public and private researchers in order to focus their staffing and research dollars on producing results that advance Wisconsin's production agriculture.

Producers need independent verification of new technologies, products, and practices.

E. Careers in Agriculture

We support efforts to encourage the promotion of careers in agriculture.

F. Safety

Driver's Education classes should include how motorists can safely interact with farm vehicles.