

**QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OFFICE – Bruce Braley  
IOWA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

**Budget**

1. In order to shrink the federal deficit, should spending on government services and entitlements be reduced?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*There has to be a shared sacrifice to bring down the federal deficit, which includes cuts in government services. I'm proud to have voted for \$3 trillion in spending cuts as part of my efforts to help reduce the deficit.*

2. Do you support a Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*When done right, we can balance the budget while protecting Iowa families, farmers, and seniors. I previously cosponsored H.J. Res 81, proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.*

**Farm Bill**

Americans currently spend less than 10% of their disposable income on food—thanks in large part to U.S. farm policy that has helped farmers through disaster events, supply challenges and price shocks. In addition to risk management, the Farm Bill delivers conservation programs, rural development, domestic energy production, and research that benefits American farmers and rural communities. While the Farm Bill is critical to farmers, 80% of the 2014 Farm Bill budget outlays were actually purposed for nutrition programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly food stamps).

3. Do you believe the federal government should provide farmers with a safety net that manages revenue risk and catastrophic disaster?

Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

*It is important to have a safety net in place for farmers in times of flood, draught, and other disasters. We need to ensure a safe and stable food supply. As I hosted Farm Bill listening sessions across Iowa's First District, I heard over and over again from Iowa farmers on the need for a five-year Farm Bill. That is why I fought hard to pass a Farm Bill that provides Iowa's producers with a safety-net and keeps it in place for a full five years. I was one of only 24 Democrats who supported the House Farm bill's initial vote on the Floor and I voted against amendments that would cut crop insurance.*

*Knowing how critical this bill is to Iowa's farmers and our economy I introduced a Discharge Petition to try to force a vote, urged the Conference Committee to craft a bipartisan bill, pressured Speaker Boehner multiple times to bring the Farm Bill to a vote, and crafted a bipartisan letter with Florida Republican Rep. Tom Rooney. Our letter to all House Representatives called on our colleagues to join us in demanding a full Farm Bill. I am pleased that a five year bill was passed, and that it maintained permanent law to drive Farm Bill action every five years.*

4. Would you support voluntary conservation programs that help farmers improve soil and water quality?

Yes  No

### **International Trade**

American farmers are global leaders in efficient, affordable food production. Trade agreements offer new markets and valuable export opportunities for U.S. grown agricultural products. Much of the agriculture industry's recent robust growth and current profitability is due to strong export demand.

5. Should U.S. trade agreements be subject to social reforms, labor conditions, or environmental standards in the country with which the agreement is being negotiated?

Yes  No

6. Would you vote in favor of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), also known as 'fast-track', which allows Congress to consider, without amendment, a trade agreement that the Administration negotiates?

Yes  No

*I am skeptical of this Administration's ability to negotiate a trade agreement that is truly good for Iowa. Therefore I would need additional details before voting to hand over to the Obama Administration a power that is usually held by Congress.*

### **Clean Water Act**

Farmers must comply with many state and federal environmental protection laws, including the federal Clean Water Act. Currently, the federal Clean Water Act regulates navigable U.S. waterways with both permanent and seasonal flows, but the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has drafted a revised guidance that would extend Clean Water Act jurisdiction to wetlands, ditches, gullies, and any other lands that could have connectivity to waterways. Additionally, the EPA has proposed regulations for regional nutrient and water quality standards that would overtake states' authority to manage water quality (e.g. Chesapeake Bay Watershed).

7. Should the Clean Water Act be expanded to include waters other than navigable streams and flowing waterways?

Yes  No

*Expansion of the Clean Water Act is one of many options under consideration, as a possible way to help clean up Iowa's drinking water and recreational waterways for hunting and fishing. However, I am open to all suggestions on how to achieve these goals, and I hope to find ways to clean up Iowa water quality that are not overly burdensome to Iowa farmers.*

8. Should Congress give the EPA additional jurisdiction for watersheds that are impacted by multiple states, such as the Chesapeake Bay, Mississippi River, and Missouri River watersheds?

Yes  No

*I believe that states should have the opportunity to regulate these watersheds before expanding EPA authority, since states have the most expertise in dealing with their specific waterways and local environmental and health issues. I think we should also be looking at incentive-based initiatives for cleaning up these waterways.*

### **Estate Taxes**

The *American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012* made permanent the \$5 million per person estate tax exemption indexed for inflation with a 40 percent top rate.

9. Would you support increasing the exemption and reducing the estate tax rate?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*I was proud to support increasing the exemption from \$1 million to \$5 million, and reducing the top tax rate from 55% to 40%. Just as important, by indexing the exemption to inflation, it will increase, which I support. In fact, I previously offered an amendment to do just that. This was real progress, and I worked closely with the Iowa Farm Bureau to achieve this goal. I believe having a reasonable exemption level and adjusting for inflation is a responsible policy that exempts the vast majority of Iowans from the estate tax without continuing to send our nation into debt.*

10. Would you support permanent repeal of estate taxes?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  \_\_\_\_\_

### **Tax Provisions**

The start of 2014 brought with it the expiration of many temporary tax provisions important to farmers.

11. Would you support the expired Section 179 small business expensing that allows for immediate business expensing of up to \$500,000?

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

12. Would you support the expired bonus depreciation that allows for an additional 50 percent bonus depreciation for the purchase of new capital assets, including agricultural equipment?

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*Farmers take on the important role of providing safe and affordable food to our nation. In doing so, they make major investments in farm machinery, land management, construction, and many other costly projects. Both Section 179 and bonus depreciation help farmers invest in and grow their operation, while retaining access to capital. As well, while these tax provisions provide direct assistance to farmers, they support manufacturing jobs in my district and across Iowa where agribusinesses, like John Deere, and other manufacturing companies and equipment dealers provide good paying jobs to hard working Iowans.*

### **Biotechnology Labeling**

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are safe and have a number of important benefits for people and our planet. GMO crops use less water and fewer pesticides and reduce the price of crops by 15-30%. FDA does not require foods to be labeled as having been produced with biotechnology because it has found that there are no health effects associated with GMO foods or any material difference between GMO and non-GMO foods. Recently some groups have put forward state ballot initiatives and legislation to require special labels for products containing these ingredients.

13. Do you support the use of biotechnology in food products and oppose efforts to require mandatory labeling for foods simply because they contain ingredients derived from biotechnology?

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### **Energy**

Rising energy prices affect every American—families, small business owners, the U.S. military and more. To boost innovation and supply, federal tax incentives and other supports have historically been provided to both traditional and renewable energy production. However, several key tax incentives for renewable energy and infrastructure expired in 2014.

14. Would you support the tax credits that expired in 2014 for cellulosic ethanol, biodiesel, and alternative fuel refueling infrastructure?

Yes  No

15. Would you support the Production Tax Credit for wind energy which expired in 2014?

Yes  No

16. Do you support the Renewable Fuels Standard and oppose the proposed reduction in the renewable fuel usage required in the United States liquid fuel supply?

Yes  No

*The EPA's proposed reduction of renewable fuel usage is flat out wrong, and I have personally told Administrator McCarthy this. In fact, there has been no bigger advocate in the U.S. House for the RFS than me, as I have:*

- *Met with White House Advisors John Podesta and Dan Utech to discuss how EPA's proposal will hurt Iowans (March 25, 2014)*
- *Delivered a petition of over 100,000 signatories to the EPA in opposition to EPA's proposal (January 28, 2014)*
- *Joined a telephone town hall to urge farmers to comment on EPA's proposal (January 21, 2014)*
- *Sent a letter to EPA Administrator McCarthy urging the Administrator to support an RFS that will support innovation and rural economies, and reduce our reliance on foreign oil. (January 16, 2014)*
- *Met with EPA Administrator McCarthy to discuss how the proposal will hurt Iowans and the future of renewable fuels (January 15, 2014)*
- *Testified with Governor Branstad at EPA's field hearing on the proposal (December 5, 2013)*
- *Sent a letter to EPA Administrator McCarthy, USDA Secretary Vilsack, and OMB Director Burwell in support of a reasonable increase in the biodiesel volume requirement in the RFS, which has exceeded RFS targets each year. (November 15, 2013)*
- *Hosted a bipartisan Congressional briefing with Rep. Steve King where ISU Professor Bruce Babcock discussed the dangers of lowering the RFS (November 12, 2013)*
- *Hosted four other bipartisan Congressional briefings with Rep. Lee Terry to educate and provide resources to Members and Staff regarding the RFS and its benefits*
- *Sent a letter to President Obama regarding the negative impact and shortsightedness of the leaked RVO numbers. I pressed Obama to visit Iowa and support the jobs, innovation, and energy independence created by the biofuels industry. (November 9, 2013)*
- *To balance the record, I submitted comments for a House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee hearing on the RFS to highlight the economic benefits of the RFS and address the unbalanced panel called to testify by the committee. (June 3, 2013)*
- *Early on in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, when Energy and Commerce Committee White Papers elevated the "blend wall," I invited Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman to visit a bio-refinery in Iowa and see firsthand the benefits the RFS is bringing to Iowa and our nation.*

**Antibiotics**

Antibiotics are critical tools for both human and animal health. Farmers rely on antibiotics to treat sick animals and also to prevent disease, through low-level (subtherapeutic) use. Concerns over antibiotic resistance prompt some to dispute the use of antibiotics for animals.

17. Should subtherapeutic use (low-level, disease prevention use) of antibiotics on livestock farms be allowed to continue?

Yes  No

### **Animal Care**

Modern animal agriculture faces numerous opponents who are working to dictate farm production practices or ultimately eliminate animal production for food. Under the premise of humane animal care, these groups have instigated prohibition on horse processing facilities, bans on gestation stalls for pregnant sows, and expansive housing requirements for laying hens – all of which have not been proven to benefit animal welfare. As a result of these initiatives, thousands of horses have been abandoned and livestock farmers are being forced into difficult business decisions—whether to make substantial capital investments or get out of business.

18. Should government determine the best farm practices and methods for raising livestock?

Yes  No

*Farmers should always maintain primary control over their business, and I would not support blanket federal legislation that puts over-burdensome and unfair mandates on specific agricultural practices. There are a variety of state and local laws governing agricultural practices, and I believe that farmers, just like any American, should abide by their state and local laws related to their work.*

**Please return by April 30 to: Iowa Farm Bureau Federation  
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