



April 30, 2014

Craig Hill  
President  
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation  
5400 University Ave  
West Des Moines, IA 50266

Dear Craig,

Thank you for all the Iowa Farm Bureau does to represent the interest of Iowa's farmers and the entirety of Iowa's agricultural community. As the only rural candidate in the race for United States Senate, the members of Iowa's agricultural community are more to me than just a significant part of our state's economy – they are also my neighbors, friends, constituents, and family. That is what makes the issues addressed in this questionnaire of even greater importance to me.

In order to fully express my position on some of these key issues, I would like to generally share that I am philosophically opposed to government subsidies and influences on the private marketplace. However, I do believe that if we were to end programs in a way that impacts Iowa's farming economy, it would have to be done across the board, for every sector at the exact same time – meaning that until and unless that day comes, I will continue to passionately stand in defense of the RFS and other related agriculture programs.

Thank you for allowing me to share my responses with your statewide membership, and again, thank you for all you do.

Warmest regards,

Joni Ernst

Name Johi Ernst

**QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OFFICE  
IOWA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

**Budget**

1. In order to shrink the federal deficit, should spending on government services and entitlements be reduced?  
Yes  No
2. Do you support a Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget?  
Yes  No

**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
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

**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
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

**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
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

**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

**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

**Please return by April 30 to:**

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