

# **Role of the Florida Farm Bureau in Production of a Wholesome Food Supply**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The objectives of my presentation are to: 1) present information on the Florida Farm Bureau's role at the state and national levels in maintaining farm profitability, sustainability and resource protection, 2) give examples of the policy impacts of the Food Quality Protection Act, the Florida Nitrate Law, and the Farm Bill, 3) explain Florida Farm Bureau's role in those public policy debates and grass roots farm initiatives, 4) give an international perspective of the public debate, and 5) discuss the effects of chemophobia as it relates to the European Community and the possible correlation in the united states.

## **Subjects to be Covered**

### **FQPA**

Law  
Implementation/Regulation

### **Farm Bill**

Programs Market-Oriented  
EQUIP & Other Programs

### **Nitrate Bill**

Grower Buy-in  
Research

### **Chemophobia vs. Sustainability**

## **FACTS ABOUT FLORIDA FARM BUREAU**

### **Oldest Farm Organization**

Florida Farm Bureau is Florida's oldest and largest general farm organization. It was organized in November 1941 and today has a membership in excess of 110,000 member families. A general farm organization, in this sense, means one which represents all major agricultural commodities i.e.; citrus, forestry, row crops, beef, dairy, etc.

Farm Bureau is an independent, nongovernmental voluntary organization of families who are united for the purpose of analyzing and solving common problems. It is local, state, national, and

international in scope and influence. One of its major purposes and thrust is legislative involvement and influence on behalf of the agricultural industry.

### **Grass-Roots Organization**

Florida Farm Bureau is a "grass-roots" organization, one which gets its direction and policy from bona fide farmer-rancher members who adopt policy each year at the state's annual meeting. The real strength of Florida Farm Bureau lies in the counties...where the members live. It's here that the basic needs, thinking and interests are generated and ideas for service programs are begun. Being a federation, a state organization can be no stronger or effective than the sum total of its county member units.

### **Sixty-Two County Farm Bureaus Make up Florida Farm Bureau**

There are 62 organized county Farm Bureau units in Florida. Each county Farm Bureau has a county president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and board of directors. A person must be actively engaged in production agriculture to be eligible to serve on a county Farm Bureau board of directors.

### **Service-to-Member Organization**

Farm Bureau is a service-to-member organization. Only members may participate in Farm Bureau programs, activities, and services. Farm Bureau's purpose is to increase total net income to its members. Some of the many services available to members are: 1) full time legislative staff (lobbyist) in Tallahassee and Washington, 2) free accidental death coverage for members, 3) marketing program - fresh, top quality produce and farm products are available through the Farm Bureau, i.e. orange juice, fresh oranges, hams, cheese, apples, jellies, etc., 4) discounts at Busch Gardens, Coast-to-Coast Vision, Disney World, Sea World, and Universal Studios, 5) pharmaceutical program - direct prescription and non-prescription items at 30% discount, 6) insurance - life, auto, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, estate planning, 7) \$500 reward program - theft, arson, vandalism, 8) information - monthly state publication, fast facts, news releases, 9) Women's program - Kidney Fund, Youth Speech Contest, Agri-Fest, county, district, and state information

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meetings, 10) young farmer and rancher program • open to Farm Bureau members ages 18-35-outstanding Y&R contest, discussion meet, district and state conferences, 11) youth county scholarships Miss Florida Agriculture Queen Contest, Youth Speech Contest, 12) Ag Advisory Committee working directly with 15 major agricultural commodity producer groups, and 13) Ag in the Classroom • workshops and mini-grants, etc.

#### **Farm Bureaus Federated Together**

Florida Farm Bureau Federation is comprised of 62 county units federated together. The Florida Farm Bureau Federation federates itself with 49 other states and Puerto Rico, to form the American Farm Bureau Federation. The American Farm Bureau Federation boasts of almost five million member families. The Farm Bureau state office is located at 5700 S.W. 34th Street, Gainesville, Florida 32608, telephone number (352) 378-1321. The Florida Farm Bureau Federation president is Carl B. Loop, Jr. from Jacksonville. President Loop is a nurseryman by profession.

#### **State Board of Directors**

The 24-member State Board of Directors, which meets every other month, is comprised of bona fide farmers and ranchers from across Florida. They are elected for a 2-yr term by other farmers and ranchers within a three to four county district.

#### **Farm Bureau Objectives**

The purpose and objectives of Farm Bureau, as previously mentioned, is to increase net income for its

members. This is done through legislative action, service-to-member programs, and information and education efforts. Farm Bureau is the “Voice of Agriculture,” representing every major commodity produced commercially in our state. It is an organization designed to provide a means by which farmers can do together...the job that can’t be done alone. It represents the thinking and will of the “man on the land.” It also reflects the thinking of many non-farm people who share basic conservative philosophy.

#### **Annual Dues**

Farm Bureau activity is financed primarily through members paying annual membership dues. The average dues are approximately \$35. A Farm Bureau membership is a family membership.

#### **Opportunity for all Ages**

Farm Bureau attempts to provide opportunities for involvement and participation by members of the family, i.e. Women’s Program and activities, Young Farmer and Rancher Program, Scholastic Scholarships, Youth Speech Contests, etc.

We are proud of Florida Farm Bureau and the good it has done for its members and all agriculture for almost 60 yr. Our many accomplishments and achievements are proof of our success. Farm Bureau continues to launch ahead and provide services to its members through legislative, marketing, and other programs designed to increase member’s net income. It can safely be said...Farm Bureau doesn’t cost...it pays!