



CALIFORNIA WOMEN *for* AGRICULTURE

ISSUE POLICY POSITIONS

AGRICULTURE – GENERAL

California Women for Agriculture (CWA) recognizes that its mission as a volunteer, nonpartisan, grassroots agriculture organization is to promote and develop the interest of California women involved or interested in agriculture and to promote a strong agriculture industry in California.

CWA's efforts are guided by five principle objectives:

1. To speak on behalf of agriculture in an intelligent, informative, direct and truthful manner;
2. To keep CWA members informed on legislative activities pertaining to agriculture;
3. To join forces when the need arises to deal with agricultural issues and challenges;
4. To improve the public image of farmers and;
5. To develop a rapport with consumers, educators, and governmental and business leaders in communities throughout the State.

CWA is committed to maintaining a healthy and vibrant agricultural industry for California. CWA recognizes the values of all methods of production. CWA supports the farmers' right to choose their own methods of production and the individual's right to choose what they consume. CWA supports science-based decisions that champion solutions and opportunities for the betterment of all agriculture and the environment.

CWA believes that the organization's Statement of Goals and Objectives and its Principal Objectives are best embodied in more detailed issue policies spearheaded by appointed task force directors who are passionate about the issues they represent on behalf of CWA.

AG EMPLOYMENT

California Women for Agriculture recognizes the necessity of having a fair and equitable policy leading to agricultural labor reform. Agriculture employees are crucial to California's agricultural industry. We must have a skilled labor force available on a year round basis. We strongly recommend that agricultural labor policy include the following:

1. Comprehensive immigration reform that includes AgJOBS component.
2. Address the need for a stable, reliable and legal labor force. The current foreign agricultural worker program (H2-A) is ineffective and must be reformed.
3. Effective governmental control over the identification of migratory agricultural labor.



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4. The California Agricultural Labor Relations Act must comply with the National Labor Relations Act.
5. Support the enforcement of current legislation to stop employment violations by labor contractors and labor consultants.
6. All farmers should be concerned about the well-being of their employees and should comply with current regulations concerning health, housing, and working conditions.

AIR QUALITY

California Women for Agriculture (CWA) recognizes that clean air is an essential natural resource, necessary for the health and vitality of California's agricultural industry and its residents. The quality of the air throughout California varies widely and is influenced by a number of complex factors, including but not limited to geography, urban growth, vehicles emissions and wood burning.

Air quality is the responsibility of everyone living and working in air basins where air quality has failed, or is at risk of failing, to meet state and federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. CWA recognizes the need for regulations, as they relate to monitoring and improving the air quality in regions where industry and the health of the residents are affected. Additionally, CWA encourages on-going research and the development of cleaner burning fuels, engines and biomass alternatives.

CWA advocates the following points:

1. Fair and balanced studies, based on sound science, to determine and measure pollutant sources.
2. Development of regulations based on accurate information that will help to achieve measurable improvements in air basins where air quality fails to meet state and federal standards.
3. Implementation of emission regulations for mobile and stationary pollutant sources.
4. That air quality concerns be made part of the planning process for growth in basins where agriculture is a significant economic factor.
5. On-going education of air quality issues and regulations to industry, business and residents.
6. Development of viable biomass alternatives that provide agriculture with affordable, low-emission disposal options for agriculture waste.
7. Practical and flexible cultural management practices for the reduction of particulate matter and ozone emissions.

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ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE

California Women for Agriculture recognizes that the health and welfare of farm animals is of foremost concern to agricultural producers. Economic return to producers is dependent upon good husbandry practices. We support the following policy:

1. Education of consumers, students, and the agricultural industry about current animal agriculture production practices.
2. Scientific research to improve farm animal production with results directed toward improved animal care practices, increased efficiency of production and reduced impact on the environment.
3. Farm animals consume feedstuffs and by-products that are produced by other sectors of the agricultural community. Commonly fed by-products include: cottonseed hulls, cottonseed meal, citrus pulp, almond hulls, molasses, sugar beet pulp, carrots, potatoes, and other fresh vegetables. Animals are cared for on a daily basis.
4. As these well cared for animals are prepared for human consumption, they must meet industry and government quality assurance standards. In addition, all animals must be free of drug residues to prevent any risk to the consumer. The end result is healthy, well fed, well cared for animals that provide consumers with a nutritious and safe food supply.

Farm animals provide consumers with more than just food and fiber; people use many goods that are derived from animal by-products: leather goods, candles, sporting equipment, china, floor wax, detergents, photography film, rubber tires, asphalt, crayons, chewing gum, insulin, coating materials used on vitamins and medicines, lanolin, down and feather products.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

California Women for Agriculture (CWA) supports the development and incorporation of biotechnological tools into agricultural research and production. Biotechnology will give producers greater flexibility in making responsible management decisions by reducing input costs, increasing crop yields, promoting integrated pest management, providing environmental protections for our natural resources, and facilitating the development of new products and processes.

CWA supports the biotechnology industry's statement of mission and ethics. In addition, we believe

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the extensive testing procedures and scientific peer review process inherent in the coordinated efforts of United States regulatory agencies (EPA, FDA, USDA) provides substantial regulatory oversight and assurance of safety.

Biotechnology has tremendous potential for positively affecting, not only farmers, but also consumers by developing new products and opening new markets. These new products have the capability of improving health, solving vexing environmental problems, and decreasing world hunger. They also have the capability of enhancing the nutritional value of food, protecting crops, animals and humans from diseases and pests.

CWA condemns the activities of bio-terrorists.

CWA firmly believes it is unnecessary, confusing, and costly to the consumer to label for biotechnological products or processes.

CWA believes that any government policy regarding biotechnology must be based on valid risk assessments and sound scientific research.

CWA is opposed to a county-by-county ballot measure method to regulate biotechnology.

CROP PROTECTION

California Women for Agriculture recognizes that the judicious use of crop protection tools is necessary to combat crop-damaging insects, weeds, and, plant and soil-borne diseases. As part of an integrated pest management (IPM) program, crop protection tools are needed to produce enough high-quality, safe, and affordable food, animal feed, and fiber to meet the demands of this nation, and to assist in feeding the world in a sustainable manner. We encourage a fair and balanced regulatory system on the state and federal level based on scientific evidence that enhances the production, distribution, and application of crop protection tools to ensure the safety of the users, agricultural producers, and public. We encourage continued development and improvement of IPM techniques, and pest-resistant plants.

We support the following points:

1. Sound science must be used when evaluating (or reevaluating) crop protection products and when establishing laws and regulations for their use. Re-registration of regulated crop protection tools should

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make every effort not to reduce the availability of these tools for use by the agricultural industry.

2. Research must continue to assist the agricultural industry in finding environmentally friendly, affordable and effective crop protection tools.

3. All invasive pests must be eradicated, not merely controlled, to protect our food supply and protect our ability to export our products to other countries.

EDUCATION

California Women for Agriculture recognizes the necessity of legislation that supports the following:

1. A long range, adequate base of funding for public education in California.
2. State programs in vocational agricultural education including adequate funding and staffing for the support unit with the State Department of Education.
3. State and local education programs in general agriculture in grades K-12.
4. Continuation and funding of agricultural vocational and general agricultural classes in the Community College System.
5. Continued support and expansion of schools of agriculture in the State College and University Systems.
6. Adult vocational education in agricultural classes and courses in local education agencies.
7. Renewal and funding of the Federal Vocation Act.
8. Youth leadership development through 4-H and Future Farmers of America Programs.
9. Continued support and funding of public and private agricultural research (i.e., USDA, University, Dept. of Food and Ag., Soil Conservation Service, and private industry).
10. Educational programs of the Cooperative Education Service, Farm Advisors' programs and Agricultural Commissioner's offices.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

California Women for Agriculture believes in and has a vested interest in the care and protection of the environment to ensure its productivity and its enjoyment for present and future generations. CWA believes that the ESA could serve as useful legislation; however, there is a concern that the Act is not

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used in the best interests of the environment, but rather as an unyielding tool of special interest groups that promote dissention instead of consensus. Additionally, because of the rigidity and absolutes upon which implementation of the Act is based, CWA supports amendments to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 which include the following:

1. Require throughout the process the use of sound, verifiable science that is clear and convincing, without any subjective interpretation.
2. Require the development of social and economic impact analysis, including compensatory adjustments, concurrent with the listing of a species and development of a recovery plan.
3. Encourage the development of habitat conservation plans that address more than one listed species and eliminate subjective biological units (sub-species, populations, and stocks).
4. Require that the historical use of land be considered whenever private property is being considered for habitat listings or for mitigation purposes.
5. Provide equal access to the courts for those challenging a listing and allow for administrative appeal of qualified major decisions and/or judicial review by qualified affected parties.
6. Establish a scientific peer review process to ensure the soundness of the data and the analysis used in the listing decision.
7. Provide for greater public input throughout the legislative process.

Background: The U.S. Congress passed the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) to "provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depended may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of [the Act]."

(Endangered Species Act of 1973, Section 2(b).)

ENERGY

California Women for Agriculture believes that it is in our country's best interest to develop a smart energy policy that would use present technologies, develop new ones, and expand renewable energy sources that would help build high-tech industries, create jobs; give us more flexibility in dealing with unstable world oil markets; and improve the health of our air, water and atmosphere.

California Women for Agriculture recognizes that adequate energy supplies must be readily available year-round, and energy costs must be affordable for the economic production of food, fiber, flowers, nursery and forests.

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To ensure stable, reliable, and affordable sources of energy we support the following:

1. The development of clean-energy technologies, including the use of biomass cogeneration plants using agricultural wastes as its energy source.
2. Continued investments and incentives to make current technologies more efficient and cleaner and new, renewable sources, more acceptable.
3. Continued global efforts to support energy policies that will produce a cleaner environment, supply affordable energy to everyone, and support a global energy transition that ensures a sustainable energy supply to the global economy.
4. Coordinated California state policy that fully addresses the environmental benefits of renewable fuels produced from biomass.

FOOD SAFETY

California Women for Agriculture believes in the value of a safe and affordable food supply for our nation and the world. Consumers must have confidence that our food supply is wholesome and safe.

Through the use of good agricultural practices, good manufacturing practices, food safety programs, and quality assurance programs, California growers and ranchers can help reduce the risk of food contamination.

Growers, harvesters, processors, distribution companies, food handlers, retailers, and consumers share responsibility for the safety of our food supply. We believe it is the industry's responsibility to minimize the potential for microbiological risks in growing, packing, and cooling of food products.

To ensure the safety of our food supply we support the following:

1. Industry-wide voluntary guidelines, such as the Food and Drug Administration's, "Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables" which helps the industry minimize microbiological food safety risks.
2. Regulations based on the findings of sound science.
3. A clean and sanitary work environment, to minimize potentially harmful conditions.
4. Continued consumer education about proper food handling practices.



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GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

California Women for Agriculture (CWA) recognizes that if a climate change policy is deemed beneficial it should be enacted nationally to prevent individual states from being put at a competitive disadvantage. Additionally, require throughout the process the use of sound, verifiable science that is clear and convincing, without any subjective interpretation.

CWA encourages the careful management of natural resources in the effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address global climate change issues.

CWA supports incentives and voluntary participation in programs which encourage operational changes and practices that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

LAND USE

California Women for Agriculture believes farmers, ranchers and producers are involved in a business that requires the right to manage and control that business. However, we recognize the importance of agriculturally sensitive land use planning. Land Use policies and laws should be fair, logical, and legally supportable; they should encourage consistent utilization of resources dependent on the suitability of the land. Because of the diverse options concerning land use, California Women for Agriculture proposes careful consideration of the following:

1. Participation of agriculturists in the planning needed to guide development of growing communities, with attention to the economic, as well as, the environmental implications.
2. Balanced utilization and conservation of land resources, taking into account the social and economic needs of the people of the area, and of the state, nation and world.
3. Local establishment of stable or permanent urban-rural boundaries, higher density development, and redevelopment efforts to prevent encroachment of urban uses into economically productive farmland.
4. Maintain planning at the local level so that local zoning supports the right to farm and the continuation and implementation of the Williamson Act.



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5. Utilization of all presently owned public lands and non-agricultural zoned lands before more such lands can be acquired or rezoned by public entities for development.
6. Active management of public lands to enhance wildlife habitat; provide a stable supply of timber for Californians; address forest health decline and post-wildfire restoration-related activities; and ensure ample recreational opportunities, among other benefits.
7. Protection and preservation of family-owned farms and agribusiness operations.
8. State guidelines for land use incentives to continue agricultural production.
9. The elimination of inheritance and estate taxes to assure that enough prime farmland remains in production to protect our domestically grown food supply.
10. When agricultural land is converted to development, mitigation for the loss of productive agricultural land should be required at a ratio of no less than 1:1. We support the use of agricultural conservation easements on a voluntary basis.
11. Land retirement should only be implemented when the landowner voluntarily enters into a contract to remove his/her land from production and when it is of benefit to the needs of the people of the surrounding area and the state. Farmland should not be retired if such action will have a detrimental effect on the viability of sustainable agriculture in the surrounding area.

LEGISLATION

In order to ensure the economic stability of agricultural production in California, California Women for Agriculture recognizes the necessity of properly balanced local, state and federal legislation for enhancement and encouragement of the free enterprise system.

In conjunction with our stated goals promoting and protecting agriculture, and for the wellbeing of public health, safety, and welfare, California Women for Agriculture supports legislation at all levels of government which assures a continued sound and healthy agricultural industry. When necessary, we will vigorously oppose legislation that threatens the viability of agriculture as part of the private enterprise system.

Because agriculture is a basic industry, California Women for Agriculture supports legislation and/or actions which require consideration on issues such as the following:

1. Preservation of economically productive agricultural land.
2. Adequate and affordable water supplies.
3. Adequate and affordable energy supplies.
4. Effective pest control and pest exclusion, detection and eradication activities.

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5. Adequate labor force, labor housing and fair agricultural labor laws.
6. Marketing of agricultural products in domestic and foreign markets.
7. Continued agricultural research and education.
8. Economic production along with inherent protection of farm animals.
9. Expanding consumer awareness of production agriculture.
10. Equitable funding (based on both commodity value and population) for adequate transportation and distribution systems for agricultural products.
11. Affordable agricultural financing to allow a fair profit to the farmer and to provide the consumer with quality products at reasonable prices.
12. We support the dissolution of a federal inheritance tax as a means to encourage the preservation of the family farm unit.
13. We oppose ballot box measures that adversely affect agricultural practices.

RELIGION

California Women for Agriculture encourages religious leaders to consider all aspects of agricultural issues before making decisions that may influence or affect production agriculture. We encourage religious leaders to actively seek information from those people who make their living by farming before adopting any policy affecting agriculture.

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

California Women for Agriculture (CWA) supports the management of renewable forestry resources and provision of the products California needs while enhancing forest ecosystems and biological diversity.

CWA supports industry practices that are dedicated to obtaining the above goals in the most responsible manner possible by employing sustainable forestry practices while meeting or exceeding environmental protection requirements.

To ensure that forests provide future generations the same or greater economic and environmental value as they do currently, CWA supports initiatives that promote and foster sustainable forest management.



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CWA will encourage cooperative programs and actions that utilize modern forestry science, technology, and educational outreach. CWA also supports cooperative conservation that fosters an environment in which state and federal agencies can work productively with private landowners and managers to ensure the long-term viability of forest resources and the many values forests deliver.

CWA supports efforts to establish a regulatory structure that emphasizes on-the-ground performance over one-size-fits-all prescriptions.

TRADE & MARKETING

If California agriculture is to remain strong and viable, California Women for agriculture stresses the need for fair and equitable trade and marketing legislation that includes the following:

1. Expansion of export markets for California agriculture.
2. Free trade with other countries, or relief from subsidized imports.
3. Quality standards of imported foreign products should meet the same standards required of U.S. products.

TRANSPORTATION & DISTRIBUTION

If California is to remain a viable agricultural production state, California Women for Agriculture recognizes the importance of adequate transportation and distribution systems to allow safe and timely movement of agricultural products from producers to consumers. We encourage legislation that includes the following:

1. Funding to maintain adequate and safe highways and railroads in the state and nation.
2. Fair and equitable taxation that allows operators to stay in business.



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WATER

California Women for Agriculture recognizes that water is a major resource with values stemming from its quality, quantity, reliability, and affordability. It must be developed and protected in order to ensure the continuity of economic production of foods and fiber in the State of California. Because of the complexity of the subject, we recommend:

1. Development of water policy and resources must consider the needs of the state as a whole and its regional components recognizing the sustainable and economic values for agriculture, urban, industrial, and environmental diversity.
2. Protection of existing water supplies, while supporting surface storage and conjunctive use to provide reliable water for current and future needs.
3. Protection of existing surface and groundwater rights and reducing the redirection of current water sources is paramount to the preservation of agriculture and communities.
4. Development of public education programs about farm water needs and efficient use, as well as, its benefits to all.
5. Development and implementation of local groundwater management, water quality, and conservation strategies.
6. Any development, which creates a new water demand, be required to show development of an equivalent reliable water supply.
7. The CAL-FED process must balance restoration efforts with a plan to improve water supply and water quality.
8. Irrigation water costs associated with more rigorous drinking water standards should be minimized for production agriculture