

Delegates Adopt New Agriculture Production, National Issues Policy

By Ashley Rice, FarmWeek (December 5th)

At Illinois Farm Bureau's 2020 virtual Business Meeting, voting results revealed delegates overwhelmingly supported the policy submittals.

“As we tallied the votes for all of these submittals, to my knowledge, I don’t recall that any of them were under like 93, 94% approval from the delegate body,” noted Mark Gebhards, executive director, IFB Governmental Affairs and Commodities. “So, I think that speaks to the fact that they (the delegates) felt comfortable, that they felt that they did have input.”

Adopted Agriculture Production and National Issues policy ranged from renewable fuels and contract production to dairy marketing and food labeling. IFB delegates supported renewable fuels policy from Logan County calling for the creation of a statewide biodiesel blending standard for B20 or higher. “I know the (Illinois) Soybean Association along with the (Illinois) Corn Growers (Association) has certainly put a huge priority ... on this renewable fuels area,” commented Gebhards. “Our voting delegates were able to emphasize the fact that we would be supportive of that as well.”

Delegates also voted to support amended contract production and marketing policy stating contracting options offered by a processor should be transparent and available to all producers marketing through that processor with considerations for volume, delivery and quality.

Meanwhile, a Clinton County dairy marketing policy submittal concerning milk prices was included and policy concerning federal milk market order reforms to depooling rules was amended and included from Perry County.

Conservation program policy language from LaSalle County was added supporting a flexible, renewable one-year program that pays producers rates similar to the Conservation Reserve Program that incentivizes specified nutrient loss reduction practices on working ground with an emphasis on improving water quality.

Risk management/crop insurance policy was included as amended and supports a crop insurance program, which more closely matches Risk Management Agency’s discount schedules to typical grain industry discount schedules.

Food labeling policy from Winnebago-Boone was passed, and spells out requirements for honey, including the country of origin label be placed on the front of all packaging in a readable font size.

A recommendation to the IFB Board of Directors submitted by District 2 Livestock Working Group was also passed by delegates. “That recommendation encourages the Board of Directors to create a livestock working group to look at pricing issues within the livestock industry and transparency of those issues,” explained Gebhards. “And making sure ultimately at the end of the day that there is profitability in the livestock industry for our members. So, the Board of Directors will be taking that up ... in the upcoming month to decide how they want to move forward ... with that recommendation from the delegate body.” The approved policies and recommendation to the board will be added to the 2021 IFB policy book and will guide staff and members in the upcoming year.

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