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# **Policy Development Materials**



## POLICY DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

- November** During the MFBF Annual Convention, District Caucuses nominate State Policy Development Committee.
- January** MFBF President appoints State Policy Development Committee.
- June** Summer Conference, state advisory committees review policy. MFBF sends committee minutes to counties for review and possible policy resolution development.
- September** County Annual Meetings  
- Counties appoint County Policy Development Committee for the next year.
- Oct. 1** RESOLUTIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED OR EMAILED TO THE STATE OFFICE.
- Oct. 1** BYLAWS CHANGES MUST BE POSTMARKED OR EMAILED TO THE STATE OFFICE.
- Oct. 6** (*tent.*) State Policy Development Committee meets to review resolutions.
- Oct. 13** (*tent.*) Resolutions and bylaws changes mailed to counties.
- Nov. 17-20** State Annual Convention – Missoula, Montana

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE COUNTY RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

## **HOW APPOINTED**

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- Appointed by county President and Board of Directors
- Responsible to Board of Directors

## **STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEE**

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- Composed of persons representing the major interests in the county, which may include some or all of the following:
  - One person representing each major commodity
  - One person with an interest in local governmental affairs
  - One person with an interest in state governmental affairs
  - One person with an interest in national governmental affairs
  - One person with an interest in Farm Bureau service matters
  - One person representing each major geographical area of the county, such as legislative districts
  - One person representing women's interest
  - One person representing young farmer interests

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

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- To draft annually, policy recommendations on local, state and national matters of importance to the county membership, to be presented to Board of Directors and membership for their consideration. These recommendations may be received from any voting member of Farm Bureau or any Farm Bureau committee. The Resolutions Committee should meet as often as necessary to adequately make decisions concerning policy recommendations. Area or "kitchen" meetings are a good way to encourage producer participation.
  - Following their meetings, the committee should present recommendations in proper form to the members.
  - Mailing recommendations to all county members prior to the annual meeting is a great way to let members know what will be discussed.
  - Be sure enough copies of all recommendations are ready for each participant at the annual meeting. Members need to be informed.
  - Assign a member of the committee to discuss each specific recommendation at the annual meeting, explaining why the recommendation is being made.

- Provide an opportunity for members to discuss and act on each recommendation after it is presented. **DO NOT ACT ON RECOMMENDATIONS EN BLOC**.
- At the annual meeting, provide an opportunity for members to present recommendations from the floor that might not have been acted upon by the committee.
- Committee chairman should keep the Board of Directors and the President up-to-date on their progress.
- Have the county secretary report county resolution recommendations to the MFBF Policy Development Committee **ON TIME – BY OCTOBER 1**, if you want them considered for state policy. If the deadline is not met, it takes the voting delegates' time to decide whether to consider the resolutions on the floor. They have the ability to accept or reject those resolutions.
- Do not be afraid to tackle controversial issues. Follow through to see that your recommendations are supported at the Policy Development Committee meetings and the convention by making sure your county is properly represented at both. You are encouraged to ask for support for your recommendations from other counties.
- Be sure the proper number of voting delegates from your county attend the state convention to fully represent your membership.

# GUIDELINES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Farm Bureau Policy begins with recommendations from Farm Bureau members at the county level. When you draft a policy recommendation, remember what will happen to it; it will be reviewed and adopted by the county membership and then sent to the state Farm Bureau Policy Development Committee for their consideration. To make sure the good ideas from your county receive the attention they deserve from the Policy Development Committee, here are a few guidelines to follow in preparing your policy recommendations.

1. **USE PLAIN ENGLISH.** Say what needs to be said as clearly as possible. Don't try to write like a lawyer.
2. **USE COMPLETE SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS.** Each policy recommendation should be understandable without referring to any other document.
3. **WRITE AS EITHER "WE SUPPORT" OR "WE OPPOSE".** Stay away from policy recommendations that are too general. This policy book is the lobbying directive for our organization; having concise, specific policies makes our position very clear.
4. **REFER TO PRESENT POLICY.** Whenever possible, use accurate citations to current Farm Bureau policy.
5. **SAY WHAT YOU WANT.** Let the Resolutions Committee know what you want them to do. Statements such as: "Change the present policy to read..." or "Keep the present policy..." or "Drop the current policy..." are extremely helpful to the Policy Development Committee.
6. **KEEP ARGUMENTS SEPARATE FROM POLICY.** If you feel you must include the reasons why you are recommending a particular policy, separate those reasons from the policy statement itself. Remember, if an issue is important enough to Farm Bureau members statewide to be part of our policy, background material and persuasive language should not be a necessary part of the resolution.
7. **IDENTIFY WHERE ACTION IS NEEDED.** Indicate on each resolution if it addresses a national, state or local issue.
8. **SIGN AND DATE THE RECOMMENDATION.** All resolutions submitted to the Policy Development Committee should be dated and signed by the County Farm Bureau President and Secretary.
9. **GET THEM IN ON TIME.** As soon as your county has adopted its policy resolutions see that they get to Bozeman (either by postage or electronic mail) before the deadline stated.
10. **REVIEW EXISTING POLICY TO AVOID DUPLICATIONS.** Make sure your recommendation is not already stated in the policy book.

# HOW TO WRITE A COUNTY RESOLUTION

The framework of the following sample may be useful in writing county resolutions.

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| 1. State the subject of the resolution                      | Farm disposal of mixed pesticides.   |
| 2. Define the problem                                       | Disposal of mixed pesticides<br>is a serious concern to farmers in<br>_____ County.  |
| 3. What does it mean to agriculture<br>and/or the community | The only method to dispose of mixed<br>pesticides or reinsate from pesticide<br>equipment is to dilute them and<br>spray them on the crops, which is<br>time consuming during production.<br>We are also concerned for safety of<br>the environment, farmers and our<br>neighbors. |
| 4. Explain why action is wanted                             | We are concerned about increasing<br>Government restrictions and the<br>need for further research in this area.  |
| 5. Summarize what is proposed                               | We feel the Agriculture Experiment<br>Station should conduct research to<br>develop alternative methods of disposal for<br>mixed pesticides and<br>pesticide rinsates.   |

County resolutions such as the above may result in the following state policy:

## **Farm Disposal of Mixed Pesticides**

"We support increased applied research in the area of farm disposal of mixed pesticides and encourage the AES to develop alternative methods of disposal for mixed pesticides and pesticide rinsates."

# PROPOSED COUNTY RESOLUTION FORM

1. Subject:

2. Problem:

3. Explanation:

4. What & Why:

5. Summarize:

\*This document is optional and is only meant to help formulate your thoughts while writing new policies. However, we recommend including this document if you think it will help the Policy Development Committee better understand the intent of your new proposed policy.