

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY**Inspections**

We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of motor vehicles. Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.

Bicycle Safety

With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws.

We recommend that scheduled bicycle events should be prohibited on roads without shoulders. #98

While more bicycles are using rural roads earlier in the morning and later in the evening, we recommend that these bicycles display SMV signs because of the poor visibility during this time of day.

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of farmers.

We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and roads in an effort to improve safety conditions.

We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow moving vehicle signs for any purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. #98

We urge that the State Department of Highways not permit the use of new or reconstructed highways until the proper lines have been affixed on the highways. We also believe that these lines should be maintained on our present highway system.

We recommend a flashing light be placed on overwidth farm equipment, on the extreme left side, when traveling on public highways.

All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the "other driver" being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her vehicle. #97

Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and locales of such movements and encourage safe practices.

Truck Regulations

We recommend that trucks hauling new raw agricultural products be allowed both the gross weight tolerance of 1000 lbs. and the 15% axle weight tolerance before any fines are levied. #99

Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws. #98

We oppose any further reduction of axle weight limits on trucks.

We believe that vehicles with a farm registration (farm tags) should be exempt from the Inner Bridge Formula.

We suggest that a committee composed of farm truck owners and the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Division be established to monitor the system and find solutions to any problems. A toll-free number or a reference booklet should be provided for farmers.

We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive Maintenance Program.

We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time periods to get them repaired.

We urge the Maryland Department of Transportation re-evaluate their rules in an attempt to ease the reporting burden upon the farm truck owners and to make these regulations more realistic when addressing daily walk-around inspections, weekly time logs and on-farm inspections.

We support legislation that would increase the maximum length for any combination of vehicles with a power unit that is a cargo carrying vehicle from 55 feet to 65 feet.

We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland.

We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within each class. #96

We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the transportation of farm commodities. #2001

Fines & Surcharges

We support the concept of allocation of truck fine revenues to the transportation fund. However, we oppose a so-called road wear surcharge on heavy trucks, as it will be a great financial burden to the small businessman and the farm community.

Present law only allows the driver of a truck to appeal a fine or violation against the truck or its contents. We recommend that the law be amended to allow the driver or the owner to make such an appeal.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**Production Ag as a Priority**

The University of Maryland's agricultural framework of teaching, research and extension are vitally important to the future of food and fiber production in Maryland. We urge the leadership of Maryland Farm Bureau to maintain a close vigilance over programs and actions of the State's land grant institution to insure that agriculture continues to receive adequate emphasis and resources.

We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of Advisors.

We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland, but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research.

We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support Maryland Cooperative

Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs. #2000

Research and Data

Maryland Farm Bureau requires that any research data provided to legislative or regulatory bodies meet accepted criteria and protocol that would allow it to be published in leading scientific journals. #98

We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase competition with other areas of the country.

Funding

Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should continue to financially support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the Maryland Cooperative Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. #2000

We support a change in the budgeting procedures to give Maryland Cooperative Extension a separate line item in the University of Maryland College Park budget. We also believe that a larger portion of the budget should be designated for MCE. #2000

We request adequate funding to the University of Maryland operating budget to fund the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. We also support the hiring of as many additional personnel as are required to analyze and return recommendations to submitters within 10 days after the sample is received at the lab. #2000

Because the University of Maryland's Agricultural Experiment Station's research, farms have greatly benefited Maryland farmers, we urge the University of Maryland to provide additional funds and equipment to continue this vital research.

We support the continuation of funding of the Virginia pine research by the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment station.

We urge adequate funding be given to the University to study and make recommendations for low input sustainable agriculture.

Maryland Cooperative Extension

We support the strong emphasis on agriculture, aquaculture, and farm family activities provided by the Maryland Cooperative Extension. #97

We support the newly enacted University of Maryland Nutrient Management Educational Program.

We encourage the Maryland Cooperative Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in the fall prior to planting small grains. #97

We further support the Maryland Cooperative Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other educational programs. #96

We urge that the Maryland Cooperative Extension place an Extension agent in the county where a position is vacated.

Due to agriculture's ever increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment stations and specialist positions in the Maryland Cooperative Extension.

We support maintaining the title "county agent". #97

Teacher Preparation

We urge the University of Maryland System to continue to develop a program to prepare teachers for their careers with courses in agri-science as a requirement towards their teaching degree. #2000

Curriculum

We oppose any reduction in the emphasis upon the Home Economics curriculum offered by the University of Maryland.

We also recommend that the University of Maryland offer a course on agricultural land appraising.

UTILITY EASEMENTS

When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible. Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary as a result of building waterways, ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars and weeds by the utility company.

VA HOSPITALS

Instead of closing or reducing beds in existing hospitals, we propose the facilities be used for VA patients in lieu of building new VA hospitals.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

We recommend that Maryland landfills be closed to out-of-state garbage and rubble. #97

WELFARE REFORM

We urge the implementation of meaningful welfare reform that will remove monetary incentives for illegitimacy, require able-bodied individuals to work, provide a cap on benefits and limit the time an individual can remain on welfare.

WILDLANDS

We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry management plans. #99