



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND A SAFE FOOD SUPPLY



The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) at its convention in June 2012 voted to form a committee to study agriculture in the US. Study materials are ready. The materials are many and they are complex.

Program Co-Directors of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, Judy Helein and Karole McKalip, are grateful to a committee of the Montgomery County, Maryland League of Women Voters, led by Margaret Chasson, a member of the US Agriculture Update Committee. This Montgomery County League Committee edited the extensive, in-depth materials into three interesting easy-to-read sections and shared their work with us. LWVFA will hold consensus meetings in February and March using the materials provided by Montgomery County.

In February, units will discuss an Overview that provides a summary of the Federal Government’s role in agriculture and Part I that examines the economic health of the agriculture sector. In March, units will consider the current technology issues in agriculture including topics such as labeling, genetically modified organisms, and animal management. Consensus questions are included in this issue of the VOTER and will be used to focus unit discussions. Results of our consensus meetings will be reported to LWVUS in April and presented to the national convention in June.

Calendar

February

- 1 Briefing and At Large Meeting, Packard Center 10 a.m.**
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 3 March VOTER Deadline
- 5 Women’s Legislative Roundtable (WLRT) in Richmond
- 7 LWNCA Board Meeting
- 10-13 Unit Meetings**
- 12 WLRT in Richmond
- 14 League of Women Voters Birthday
- 17 Presidents’ Day
Schools Closed
- 19 Board Meeting**
WLRT in Richmond

Inside This Issue

Presidents’ Message	2
League Welcomes New Members	2
Recount: The Sequel	3
Housing Funds in Governor’s Budget	4
Domestic Violence Serves 594 in 2013	4
League Lobby Day in Richmond	5
Kelly Testifies in Richmond	6
EQAC Submits Annual Report	6
Sustainable Agriculture and a Safe Food Supply:	
An Overview	EF-1
Part I - Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector	EF-8
Consensus Questions for Part I	EF-16
Report Issued Concerning Judges	EF-16
Unit Meeting Locations	7



Presidents' Message



How successful are your resolutions for the New Year? We are hoping that you included the time to be more active in our League and to volunteer without being asked. There are so many local boards and commissions that we could monitor, many voter service opportunities, and various short- and long-term jobs. ASK! VOLUNTEER! We will find the activity for your time and interest

This *VOTER* is full of interesting information compiled by the **LWVUS agricultural update** task force and condensed for us by Margaret Chasson of Montgomery County, Maryland, League. Fairfax will be discussing the information at our February and March unit meetings. Make a special effort to read the material in this issue of the *VOTER* to become well informed on the subject. By doing this, you will add to the discussion and the consensus reached will better represent the views of your unit.

Voter Service Members Meet to Plan for 2014

Led by Janey George, the members heading each of the Voter Services got an early start in planning for the election this fall. They agreed to learn one another's roles so that they could work together. The goals are to improve on voter registration, education, and encouraging voters to go to the polls.

The requirement for voters to bring photo IDs to the polls caused the most concern. Unless something changes, it will go into effect on July 1 of this year. Members were brimming with suggestions for enabling people to get these IDs, everything from suggesting that the registrars bring cameras to the citizenship ceremonies to fundraising by the League to help underprivileged people pay for the necessary proofs of citizenship. League Voter Service volunteers will cooperate with the County Election Office in educating the public about this new requirement as soon as final decisions have been made by LWV-VA, which is consulting with the State Board of Elections.

Plans for 2014 will be included in the next issue of *The Fairfax VOTER*.

You can access additional information – articles and videos – by going to our website for links. The study is very broad and fascinating, and we need your ideas and opinions for LWVFA to reach consensus. A new national position will be voted on in June at the LWVUS convention.

Another big event is coming up on February 5 that everyone should be interested in attending-League Lobby Day. Leaguers from around the state will be gathering in a show of commitment to the members of the General Assembly. We encourage everyone who can to attend this event. It will be an exciting day in Richmond; a chance to talk with others from around the state and learn what they are doing and learn more about how things work in our state capital. A schedule is included on page 5. We will be forming carpools for the trip. Call the office if you need a ride, Hope to see you there.

Julie and Helen

League Welcomes New Members

We are very pleased to announce that the following people have joined or rejoined the Fairfax League in the past several months: **Carol Bursik** (MVD), **Frieda Hugley** (F/V), **Julie Kerlin** (MCL), **Janice Kuch** (F/V), **Mary Lou Melley** (MCL), **Jim Scott** (UAM), **James Sterling** (RD), and **Patricia Van Slyke** (MVD)

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2013 - 2014

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Please e-mail address corrections to the office
or call 703-658-9150

Recount: The Sequel

By Anne Kanter, MCL Member & Recount Officer

On Dec 16, 17 and 18, the Election Board of Fairfax County held the recount for the Attorney General's race. The political parties recruited election officials and stated that we would be able to sign up for shifts. Well, when summons came, it was for all three days, from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., and "you may be asked to stay past 8 p.m.!" There were about 60 pages of instructions to download and presumably read. One quickly re-shuffled one's life, had a marathon shopping spree on the Internet, and came to the realization that Grandma's spritz cookies just were not going to show up this year. Several hundred recount officials, alternates, party observers, County Board of Elections officials and employees, the Clerk of the Court and staff, and county sheriffs gathered in the County Court House at 0' dark-thirty to be sworn in.

Sharone Lathrop and I were recount officers, and Olga Hernandez was an observer. Over the course of the next two days, all the paper ballots were recounted, by precinct, on Opti-scan machines. All the absentee and qualified provisional ballots were recounted by Congressional District. Ballots cast on the touch-screen machines had to be accepted as is. Forty teams, one Republican and one Democrat each, fed almost 300,000 paper ballots through the machines again. I know my teammate and I recast more than 10,000 ballots ourselves. We had a very quick feeding scheme worked out and a very reliable scanner. We recounted 10 precincts.

How did almost 800 more votes show up in Fairfax County? That's about a 00.3% increase. That is, 99.7% of the paper ballots cast were read. This could be considered a flaw. If the touch screen machine did not register a vote in a contest, it signaled the voter before the vote was cast. The paper ballot did not, as long as one contest somewhere on the sheet was readable. There was also about a 1% undercount, where no candidate was voted for.

The 00.3% were "kicked out" and hand-counted to see if the intention of the voter could be determined. In these cases, the recount officials were surrogates for a judge. What they decided stood. The observers could protest to their party officials but not argue with the re-counters. The intention of the voter was quickly determined in more than 95% of the cases by the re-counters. This appeared to me to be very nonconfrontational. Very few were "challenged ballots," which were to be sent to Richmond for the three-judge panel

to rule on. Results of the recount were posted, precinct by precinct, in the anteroom, including the change in count for each candidate. Political parties and media kept a running tally. The votes divided between candidates in about the same proportion as the November tallies. Obenshain made the recount moot when he conceded Wednesday afternoon. But he would not have if the recount had not been done.

We could not break off the counting in the midst of a precinct, including no bathroom breaks, and we could not be dismissed until all the counting for a precinct was done by all the teams. This made speed an issue for the rather elderly crowd. Many of us finished up by 6:30 pm on Monday but were not dismissed until 8:40, because of a balky reader on one of the machines. Lots of sudoku, crosswords and exasperation. I believe optical scanners, ballot boxes and USB's could not be changed during a precinct count without a judge's order. This could take four hours. On Tuesday, the recount was finished, and we left at 7 p.m. The Statement of Results for each precinct had to be checked, and could only be corrected by the original team, so we all came back at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, and were finally dismissed at 10:30 a.m. All this for \$116 a day, plus mileage and parking.

Some hardy souls came back on Thursday to recount the Rust-Boyko race! Sharone left town. I got a massage.

Notes From an LWVFA Observer . . .

It was confusing as people came in and the counting areas were divided in three different locations plus the room where the instructions were given in the morning. The SBE sent detailed instructions for all the re-counters, and they also received training the week before. The parties selected their recount members and alternates. Way too early to start (it was still dark) but that was part of the court order. Clerk John Frey could not find rooms in the courthouse to hold the recount in one area.

I personally observed one room that was so tight for eight teams (four people to a team) plus eight optical scan machines and tables plus staff and lawyers-- and then the ballot boxes came in! They had to move out the existing chairs and bring in narrower chairs to just fit it in; the room got warm in a hurry.--a fan was brought in; the posted capacity of the room was 20 people. Sheriff deputies were at every counting room door plus court staff, who are responsible for keeping the custody of the ballots. As I understand it, that is why this was not moved outside the courthouse, where the ballot boxes are stored in a vault after each election.

Olga Hernandez

\$9.5 Million in Housing Trust Funds Included in Governor's Budget

In early December, Governor McDonnell announced the inclusion of \$9.5 million in general fund appropriation for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund in his upcoming biennial budget.

The funding will provide low-interest loans and grants to eligible organizations to reduce homelessness and develop housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households. For a detailed explanation of the breakdown of the funding, go to <http://tinyurl.com/myb9sxd>

This action by the Governor was in large measure due to the coordinated, statewide advocacy campaign including numerous organizations, and led by the Virginia Housing Coalition (VHC) and the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH). The campaign built momentum based upon the legislative successes from the last General Assembly session resulting in the creation of a statewide housing trust fund and capitalization of that fund with \$8 million from the National Mortgage Settlement.

A final report created by the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and VHC shows that 29 applications for loans totaling \$15.5 million, and 58 applications for grants totaling \$4.8 million were submitted last summer for the \$8 million in trust funds. Due to a demand for financing that exceeded the monies allocated, many worthy developments were not funded. Those proposals which were awarded loans leveraged those dollars, on average 7:1 - for every dollar from the loan, seven dollars was secured from other funding sources.

This article is adapted from a message from the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, a broad based regional organization dedicated to the creation of successful communities through affordable housing education and advocacy.

DVAC Announced Serving 594 Clients During Past Year

By Barbara Nunes, Chair Domestic Violence

The Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC), located in the Historic Courthouse in Fairfax City, held its 2nd Annual Open House last October. DVAC served 594 clients last fiscal year (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013).

Many participants representing groups and agencies assisting victims of domestic violence provided information, brochures, and goodies (homemade cookies and other desserts) and punch. The LWVFA domestic violence committee has interviewed many of the groups—court services, commonwealth attorney's office, Safe Havens, Stronger Together, Shelter House, protective orders, Artemis House, Office for Women, Women's Center, Fairfax County Police Victims Assistance, and Tahirih to name only a few. Representatives from Northern Virginia Legal Services were also represented and I spoke with them.

I walked into a room which I thought was a consignment shop with clothes neatly arranged on hangers and organized according to size. This was the new Court/Professional Attire program for women who need appropriate clothes for court or interviews for jobs. The program provides free clothing that has been donated by various groups throughout the county. It has had success in providing donations, and as word gets out it will have more victims utilizing this service. There have already been referrals from other DV programs in the community and in other jurisdictions.

The federal grant for domestic violence has funded positions for the two commonwealth attorneys and Women's Center. This grant will expire in October 2014, and then the county must fund these two important positions. Both have been very effective in assisting victims of domestic violence.

Think Green . . .

*Americans throw away enough glass bottles and jars every two weeks to fill the 1,350-foot towers of the former World Trade Center.

*Glass never wears out -- it can be recycled forever. We save over a ton of resources for every ton of glass recycled -- 1,330 pounds of sand, 433 pounds of soda ash, 433 pounds of limestone, and 151 pounds of feldspar.



LWV-VA LOBBY DAY

(With members of NOW and AAUW)

Wednesday, February 5, 2014
Richmond, VA
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Schedule of Events

7:30 - 8:30 A.M.

Meet for breakfast - 6th floor cafeteria of the General Assembly Building

8:30 - 9:30 AM.

The Women's Legislative Roundtable -3rd Floor West Conference Room

9:30 - 11:30 A.M.

Briefing and talking points by LWV leaders
Visit your Legislators (Make appointments ahead)
Attend a House or Senate committee meeting

11:30 A.M.

Leave General Assembly Building and walk to Capitol, across the lawn. Go to
House or Senate Gallery antechambers to await admission to Gallery

12:00 NOON

Be in Senate or House Gallery to be introduced as LWV-VA members

12:45 - 2:00 P.M.

Lunch at Tobacco Company Restaurant, 1201 East Cary Street
(two blocks south on 12th Street) - Order from their excellent menu.
During Lunch enjoy networking. Share insights from this legislative session

2:00 - 3:30 P.M.

Walk or ride. . . to League Office at Franklin and 5th, for special program (TBA)
in Advantech classroom 119 (to the left) for attendees from all organizations

Kelly Testifies Before Fairfax Delegation to the General Assembly



Good morning. I am Helen Kelly, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. I speak on behalf of our members and supporters in Fairfax County and Fairfax City. Thank you for the privilege of speaking to you this morning.

The League of Women Voters supports the right of every Virginian who is qualified to vote to do so. To protect that right, we encourage you to support these policies:

- ✓ **Increased funding for state and local election services.**
- ✓ **No-excuse absentee voting.**
- ✓ **Non-partisan redistricting.**
- ✓ **Transparency in governance.**

In 2013, besides conducting the normal primary and general elections, election offices recounted votes for State Attorney General and other close races, while implementing a continuing stream of new election laws and procedures on a reduced state budget. In addition, a recent study¹ predicted that Northern Virginia will gain 134,00 jobs over the next 19 years. Many of these workers will live and vote in Fairfax County. Localities can no longer pick up costs previously paid by the state. Please increase funding for state and local election offices.

¹ George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis

EQAC Submits 2013 Annual Report to BOS

The Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) has submitted its 2013 Annual Report on the Environment. In the 55-page summary and over-500-page report, it detailed various environmental issues and made recommendations for action. The nine main chapters are: Climate Change and Energy; Land Use and Transportation; Air Quality; Water Resources; Solid Waste; Hazardous Materials; Ecological Resources; Wildlife and Environment; and Noise, Light Pollution and Visual Blight. To view the entire report, go to the Fairfax County Government homepage ><http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/eqac/report2013/> find the Environment and Energy page, and then find 2013 Annual Report on the Environment.

We also support no-excuse absentee voting, both in-person and by mail. However if bills permitting this fail, we would also support it for Virginians 65 and older, as allowed by Delegate Kory's bill. We encourage those of you who support non-partisan redistricting to start gathering allies now, to push for this needed change [after the next census] and to give voters more say in who represents them.

The League is concerned about implementation of the new Photo ID requirements for 2014. We ask that you review and amend the law if necessary, to ensure that every Virginian who is registered to vote will have easy access to a free Photo ID.

The recent recount revealed procedural, process and equipment problems that have accumulated over time. Please ask that a JLARC study of Virginia elections be undertaken during this session and that its recommendations be publicized, enacted, funded and implemented as appropriate.

We believe that adequately funding all election services, allowing no-excuse absentee voting, redistricting on the basis of community, not politics, and being open about how laws and public policies will be implemented will help voters make their voices heard on issues that concern them.

We invite you to join us for the Women's Legislative Roundtable from January 15th through March 12th in Room 3 West. Leaguers come from all over the State to attend these meetings. We hope to see you there too.

Three key recommendations were highlighted:

1. Fairfax County continue to adequately fund and implement its ongoing stormwater program, which includes dam maintenance, infrastructure replacement, water resource monitoring and management, watershed restoration and educational stewardship programs.
2. Continue support for funding for the Environmental Improvement Program for the upcoming fiscal year.
3. Transportation and recommends that non-motorized and multi-modal transportation options receive priority in all budget discussion.

Your Board welcomes anyone who is interested in environmental issues to chair or join a committee to monitor these areas and make recommendations for our League to take action.

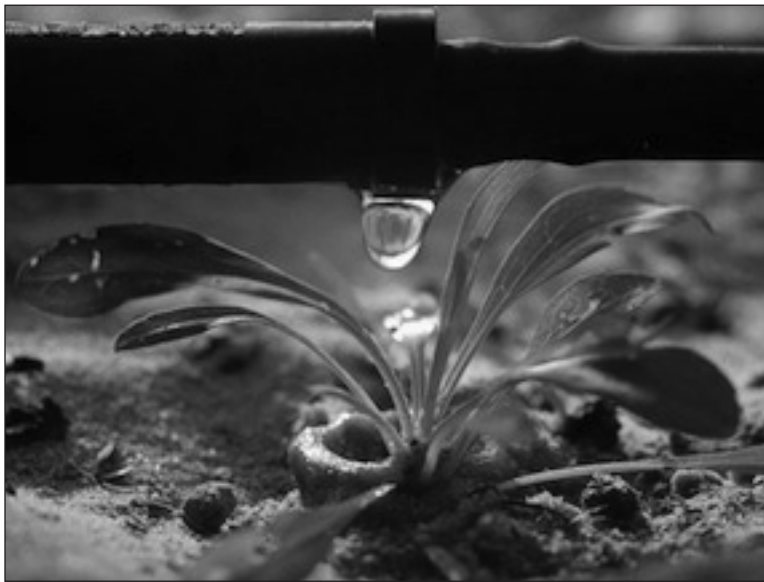
Sustainable Agriculture and a Safe Food Supply: An Overview

[Ed. Note: This Fact Sheet was prepared by the LWV of Montgomery County, Maryland (LWVMC) based upon research conducted for the LWVUS Agricultural Update. The LWVMC committee is: Margaret Chason, Chair; Elaine Apter; Maxine Montgomery, Judy Morenoff, Lorna Post, Alyce Ortuzar, and Marilyn Smith. Their report is used with permission.]

John Ikerd, retired professor of soil science at the University of Missouri has said, “We cannot prove through empirical studies that one approach to agriculture is sustainable or that another is not. It would quite literally “take forever” to collect the data for such a study. Thus, we must rely on the science of logic. What are the logical prerequisites for agricultural sustainability? I believe there is a growing consensus in support of three fundamental prerequisites: A sustainable agriculture must be ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible. Furthermore, I contend that these three dimensions of sustainability are inseparable, and thus, are equally critical to long run sustainability.”

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Increasing stresses from more erratic weather and new and different pests that move in generate a need for every possible tool we can get to help make our crops as productive as they possibly can be while maintaining a sustainable agriculture and safe food supply. Modern tractors and harvesters are more fuel efficient and emit less particulate matter and nitrous oxide and yet are more productive than equipment sold as recently as 2000. Linked with GPS and satellites, computers can control field operation from monitoring irrigation and tracking soil nutrients to forecasting weather conditions and predicting yields. Planting equipment is improving, allowing for narrower rows and more selective seed planting and reducing soil compaction. Tillage passages are reduced by planting equipment designed to penetrate crop residue. Reduced tillage means less loss of top soil through erosion, improved soil tilth, conservation of water, and lower carbon emissions.



Use of drip irrigation and pivot agriculture have allowed farmers to irrigate better with less water loss to evaporation and runoff. The reduced irrigation has, in turn, allowed for better fertilization and less soil erosion. New methods utilize field sensors to track moisture and nutrients allowing selective treatment of fields. All these modern techniques involve initial startup funding and ongoing maintenance. In

order to take advantage of these new technologies, farmers need continuing education and support.

Traditionally, biotechnology has included such practices as plant and animal breeding, fermentation, cheese and bread production, use of organisms for medicinal purposes, or development of glues, solvents and other products from plant or animal sources. Genetic engineering is one recent branch of biotechnology that has captured attention and generated controversy, but there are many other biotechnology applications in agriculture. Cloning of plants has long been a staple of farm production (cut up a potato and plant the pieces, and the new potatoes will be genetically identical), but cloning of animals began in the late 20th century. Biotechnology, as applied in agriculture and food supply, raises key questions about public vs. private research funding, the use and misuse of science, patenting of life forms, and the regulation of novel foods and

processes. Plant breeding is not a new technology. Since man first domesticated plants, plant growers have **selectively** used seed from crops with desirable qualities, choosing seed from the sturdiest plant, the largest or tastiest fruit. Following the work of Gregor Mendel, in the mid 19th century, plant breeders learned how to **crossbreed** compatible types of plants, creating hybrids that combined the best features of both parent plants.

As plant breeding techniques became more sophisticated, researchers discovered ways to overcome fertility barriers between similar species. A hybrid cereal, triticale, was created in 1875 by crossing wheat and rye. Since then, **cross-species hybridization** has yielded fruit like tangelos (tangerine and grapefruit) and the peachcot (peach and apricot), which have been well received by the public. Over the past 100 years, plant breeders have developed more breeding tools for improving crops for a variety of purposes including drought resistance, disease resistance, chemical resistance, longer storage, increased nutrition and yield, better flavor. Many of these tools require generations of plant growth before a marketable seed is produced.

Chemically or radioactively induced mutations, first introduced in the late 1920s, expanded after World War II. Seeds from plants are treated with either chemicals or irradiation and then selected for desired traits. These types of mutations have yielded over 2500 new varieties of plants, including most varieties of modern wheat, barley, rice, potatoes, soybeans, and onions.

In the mid-twentieth century, the discovery of DNA and research in genetics and molecular biology made possible a new approach to both plant and animal breeding through genetic engineering. **Precision breeding** is a technique involving the use of genetic markers to track the inheritance of genes (one of many genetic engineering techniques) when closely related plants are crossed. Plants produced using this technique are, by definition, not transgenic. In **genetic engineering** genetic material of the target organism is altered through insertion of specific genes with known function into the DNA to produce what are known as transgenic animals or plants, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). GMO modification remains controversial and will be discussed in detail in a separate fact sheet.

ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Since the green revolution, much of American farming has focused on production of biofuels, not just human nutrients. Many large farms have little crop diversity and have centered on the production of staple products such as corn, soybeans and sugar beets (monoculture). In large part, these crops are used as a source of energy rich carbohydrate in processed food, more recently for ethanol production and as animal feed, encouraging the growth of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). Animal agriculture provides the human consumer with protein, energy and many trace nutrients; however, CAFOs are less efficient than pasture-fed animals on plant based diets because they require significantly more energy, water and soil nutrients. A recent review of studies, comparing grass fed and CAFO

beef, reported in the Nutrition Journal found support for “the argument that grass-fed beef (on a g/g fat basis), has a more desirable saturated fatty acid lipid profile as compared to grain-fed beef.”

The rate of soil loss, through conventional agricultural practices and natural geographical erosion, raises concern about the agricultural system’s capability to feed the global population and safeguard soil fertility and the soil itself. An average of ten times as much soil erodes from American agricultural fields as is replaced by natural soil formation. This loss of soil affects productivity since surface soil contains most of the micro-organisms and plant nutrients required for good crop production. The decrease in the uptake of nutrients by plants affects the nutrient content of current foods. Soil erosion and runoff of chemicals used in agricultural production not only threaten the sustainability of agriculture, but also pollute water resources. The current emphasis of soil and water conservation plans is on disturbing the soil as little as possible (such as by no till practices) and crop diversity (as in rotating crops or incorporating new crops); however, the 2007 Census of Agriculture shows that only 25% of farms used some conservation methods and 18% practiced crop rotation.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN AGRICULTURE

These technologies and practices, as they affect farmers and the food supply, bring farmers and a number of government agencies together in a variety of ways in the effort to build a sustainable agriculture and a safe and ample supply of food. The principal federal agencies and the roles they play are given below.

Farm Bill and Budget Authorizations

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs described in the table below are determined in large part by the Farm Bill and the political process associated with its reauthorization. Congressional decisions about both mandatory and discretionary funding determine the budgets available to implement the programs. Mandatory funding means that the Farm Bill itself designated the amount of funding to allocate to a program. Programs with discretionary funding must go through a new appropriations process every year, in which Congressional committees decide how much money should be allocated. Funding for discretionary programs is thus much less certain.

USDA authorized spending has climbed from \$116 billion in 2009 to the \$156 billion authorized for the 2013 fiscal year before the fiscal cliff and sequester, and other cuts were made. The 132-page Fiscal Year 2014 budget proposes \$146 billion in total spending (8% below the 2013 budget), but

the exact amount will not be known until the new Farm Bill is approved.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



The USDA and its agencies develop, implement, and administer policy and programs related to farming, agriculture, nutrition, food safety, land management and natural resources, forestry, and rural development. The USDA mission statement is that it “provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.”

The chart on the following page lists USDA’s seven **mission areas**. There are currently 17 agencies and 17 offices under USDA, each of which has a specific function. The USDA agencies and/or offices involved in each area are included in the description.

Programs and services provided by the agencies and offices of the USDA include: rural broadband, grants and loans; disaster assistance to farmers and rural residents; insurance programs; restoration and conservation programs (soil, water, forests, natural prairies); environmental markets (carbon sequestration, wetland management, water quality, ecosystem services); water resources; wildfire prevention; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps); Women, Infant & Children (WIC) and child nutrition programs; an organic program; food security; importing and exporting goods; agricultural statistics; and economic and agricultural research. A few examples of these programs are given below.

Food Safety: The safety of meat, poultry and egg products is a major responsibility of the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service which oversees inspection of meat processing facilities. Recently there has been concern that processors may be able to conduct most of the inspections without supervision from the USDA inspectors. Both the USDA inspector general and the GAO found the results of a pilot program of this process unacceptable.

The USDA provides protection for the consumer not only of animal products, but also of fruits and vegetables. Through the Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Program, Specialty Crops



Inspection (SCI) Division’s Audit Programs, voluntary independent audits of produce suppliers throughout the production and supply chain are available. While these programs are voluntary, any farmer who desires to market to a major supplier must achieve certification through a SCI Division Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) audit. These audits focus on best agricultural practices to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. SCI Division GAP & GHP audits verify adherence to the recommendations made in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* and industry recognized food safety practices.

To become certified, the farmer incurs a cost for the GAP audit; to successfully pass an audit, the farmer must have comprehensive records and a multitude of plans for all aspects of the production and management of the crop. The scope of the audit is broad and includes such things as a contingency plan for deer entering his fields, procedures for hand washing by drivers who might enter a storage facility and records of all chemicals applied to the crop the disposal of crop residue, and records of all chemical applications to the crop. Procedures for handling oil leaks from machinery must be in place. Over 90 fruit and vegetable crops may be audited for GAP certification.

Safety of imported foods is under the purview of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which generally uses a bilateral “positive list” approach in dealing with foreign imports, excluding all commodities from all sources except for individual products from specific sources approved for import. The import protocols to meet the strict U.S. phytosanitary standards usually require exporting countries to make substantial public and private investments. While many of these protocols directly affect the food product, some may be aimed at protecting our domestic farms. For example, an import protocol to decrease the likelihood of the Mediterranean fruit fly’s entering the United States usually requires an importing country to conduct frequent field surveys and requires producers to build a special packinghouse.

Sustainability: Through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, farmers receive assistance in developing soil and water conservation plans and knowledge about best management practices to enhance and protect the quality of the soil. While the programs are voluntary, cost sharing from the federal or state governments may be available for

Mission Area	Description, Agencies/Offices Involved
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services	Work with farmers to guard against uncertainties of weather and markets and to improve stability of the agricultural economy. Deliver commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, and emergency assistance programs. Mission area agencies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Farm Service Agency (FSA); ✓ Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS); and ✓ Risk Management Agency (RMA).
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services	Work to end hunger and improve health in the United States. Administer federal domestic nutrition assistance programs and link scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers through science-based dietary guidance, nutrition policy coordination, and nutrition education. Mission area agencies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP); and ✓ Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).
Food Safety	Ensure the U.S. commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, and is properly labeled and packaged. Plays a key role in the President's Council on Food Safety and in coordinating a national food safety strategic plan among various partner agencies including the Food and Drug Administration in the Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency. Mission area agency is Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS).
Marketing and Regulatory Programs	Facilitate domestic and international marketing of U.S. agricultural products and ensure the health and care of animals and plants. Actively participates in setting national and international standards. Mission area agencies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS); ✓ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); and ✓ Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)
Mission Area	Description, Agencies/Offices Involved
Natural Resources and Environment	Ensure land health through sustainable management. Work to prevent damage to natural resources and the environment, restore the resource base, and promote good land management. Mission area agencies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Forest Service (FS); and ✓ Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
Research, Education and Economics	Provide integrated research, analysis, and education with a goal of creating strong communities, families and youth and maintaining a safe, sustainable, competitive U.S. food and fiber system. Mission area agencies and offices include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agricultural Research Service (ARS); ✓ Economic Research Service (ERS); ✓ National Agricultural Library (NAL); ✓ National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS); ✓ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA); and ✓ Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS).
Rural Development	Provide financial programs to support essential public facilities and services in rural America: water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. Promote economic development by providing loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools and by helping communities participate in community empowerment programs. Mission area agency is Rural Development (RD).

some practices, such as cover crops, in which the farmer incurs additional costs.

Nutrition Education: The USDA has been active in nutrition education since early 1900s. Food guides, for children and adults, based on food groups have been provided as education tools. The Basic Four and Basic Seven Food Groups and the Food Pyramid have been taught in schools as a way to have a moderate diversified diet that provides required amounts of vitamins, minerals, fiber, protein and energy for good health. Most recently, the program has been redesigned as “MyPlate.” Every five years, the USDA produces the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The guideline makes recommendations of food groups for those two years of age and older including those susceptible to chronic disease.



Food Content: The USDA Nutrient Data Base is produced by the Nutrient Data Laboratory with a mission of developing “authoritative food composition databases and state of the art methods to acquire, evaluate, compile and disseminate composition data on foods and dietary supplement.” These resources are used by professionals, schools, the general public, and as a general database for numerous publications; however, there is controversy about what the perfect diet is. *The Food-a-Pedia*, *Super Tracker* is an on-line tool that provides the opportunity to compare nutritional value of over 8000 foods from fresh vegetables to processed snacks. The tools provided are excellent and information is available on how to use them. However, education level may affect the use and understanding of the contents.

Food Distribution: The Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA provides food to those in need through a variety of programs: Food Distribution Programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps), Child Nutrition Programs that includes the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, and Women Infants and Children (WIC) program that includes the Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. All these programs are designed to provide nutritional food access through all parts of the population. More information is available on the website <http://www.fns.usda.gov/>.

The SNAP program, with a 2012 budget of \$80 billion, has been controversial. The average per person benefit is about \$135 monthly, which is intended to supplement the individual’s income. Over 47 million Americans participated in the program in 2012. Opponents question whether the

applicants honestly qualify for the program and feel it creates a dependence on government. Supporters point to the number of families living below poverty levels and our moral responsibilities. The House recently passed a bill to remove the SNAP program from the Farm Bill, substantially reducing its funding level.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Agriculture is impacted in many ways by EPA regulations.



The EPA addresses general concerns of environmental pollution, as well as reviews and registers toxic materials at both the level of use and as residues in food, air and water.

The EPA has recently expanded and updated regulatory requirements for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permits (NPDES) program. Recently updated Clean Air Act regulations will impact the management of manure, diesel equipment and other activities with air emissions. Currently, in Maryland, new equipment must meet air quality standards and the fuel for diesel engines must comply with sulfur content regulations. In Colorado, farm equipment requires pollution control devices and annual inspections to ensure that the devices are working properly and that no leaks of exhaust occur.

Management of water runoff issues is addressed through the CWA. States are required to identify impaired waters and then establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for each body, which is the maximum level of certain pollutants allowable to maintain water quality.

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, the EPA and the states register and license pesticides for use. Before registering a new pesticide, the EPA requires the applicant to provide scientific studies and test data. For pesticides used in food production, the EPA sets tolerance limits for residuals in or on food. As part of the pesticide process, the EPA registers the pesticides that are genetically added to plants – Plant Incorporated Protectants (PIP). The EPA does not register the plant. The developer of the PIP must submit the same scientific research and data as they would for other pesticides. A review takes place that includes evaluation of risks to humans from exposure. The EPA requires registered users to incorporate Insect Resistant Management in to their planting program. This includes the planting of refuge crops (plantings of rows of the similar crops which are not pesticide resistant in the same or adjacent field) to reduce the risk of insects developing

resistance.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

The scope and mission of the Food and Drug Administration, in the Department of Health and Human Services, is to provide food safety protection and education. The FDA regulates domestically produced and imported human and animal drugs, biologics, medical devices, food and animal feed, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation. The FDA accomplishes its mission by designing and enforcing regulations through the review of reports submitted by food suppliers, periodic inspections of food processing facilities, and investigations of reported food problems. These activities are supported by roughly 28% of the total FDA budget.

Food groups under FDA authority include dairy (milk, cheese, butter), plant products (vegetables, fruits, nuts, juices, spices), dietary supplements, seafood (finfish, shellfish, crustaceans, surimi-based), grain-based (bread, cereals, flour), bottled water and veterinary food and medicine. The safety of genetically engineered food and food labeling, both primarily responsibilities of the FDA, will be discussed in a later paper dealing with agricultural technology.

Food Labeling: Managing the food label program is one of the FDA's major responsibilities; it is undertaken in collaboration with USDA (primarily responsible for labels on meat products) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) (responsible for prosecution of labeling violations and misleading advertising). Foods are required to bear specific nutrition and ingredient labeling in a standard system. Food, beverage, and dietary supplement labels that bear nutrient content claims and certain health messages must comply with specific requirements. The FDA does not perform pre-market approvals of food labels, including nutrition facts or of structure-function claims (e.g., calcium builds strong bones). Neither does it regulate labels defining agricultural production processes (e.g., organic, natural, grass-fed) for which USDA is responsible.

Food label requirements include quantity information to protect against the large, partially-filled box and to facilitate consumers' comparing prices per unit for similar products. Grades and standards, product ingredients, and nutrition information are also required. In recent years, attention focused on food labeling has exploded with concerns related to nutrition, genetic modification, pesticide residue, additives, identification of known allergens, product origin disclosure, tracking of product relative to recalls, and more.

Hot topic issues in the labeling arena all seem to be fall under the umbrella of transparency. Much of the discussion in food labeling centers on the consumer's right to know (at one time this would have been considered covered in the 1962 Consumer Bill of Rights) – this is true of claims that are made, as well as information that is not shared. There is a growing market that is willing to pay extra for food with certain desired attributes, but the absence of uniformly accepted standards creates confusion amongst consumers.

A GAO report states that consumers have difficulty understanding the implications of different types of health, qualified health, and structure/function claims on food labels. The Center for Science in the Public Interest is seeking for better rulemaking and enforcement from the FDA on misleading food labels. There are many products that claim health benefits, when there is no evidence to support the claim. According to Michael Jacobson, of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, accuracy in food labels is a low priority for the FDA. FDA staff attorney, Rebecca Goldberg, speaking in a personal capacity, stated that barriers include an alphabet soup of overlapping regulatory agencies as well as First Amendment rights relative to commercial speech.

Food Safety: Legislation affecting the FDA food safety mission includes: approval of an FDA role in monitoring pesticide residues (1954), definitions and rules concerning food (1958) and color (1960) additives, labeling and post-market monitoring of infant formula (1980), nutrition labeling and education (1990), food allergen labeling and consumer protection (2004), and the Food Safety Modernization Act (2011), which calls for the FDA to prevent rather than simply respond to food contamination; the FDA describes this act as the most significant change in U.S. food safety legislation in 70 years.



The Food Safety Modernization Act gives the FDA authority to address food safety issues more fully than previously authorized; the FDA is now in the process of consulting with stakeholders to develop regulations that will establish science-based minimum standards for the safe production and harvesting of fruits and vegetables and will address soil amendments, worker health and hygiene, packaging, temperature controls, water, and other issues. Food facilities will be required to implement a written preventive control plan, provide for the monitoring of the performance of those controls and specify the corrective actions the facility will take when necessary – actions similar to the current voluntary requirements now under the USDA.

Other provisions of the act include a new system for import oversight that requires importers to ensure that their foreign suppliers have adequate preventive controls in place and authority to make these new regulations that are scale-appropriate, conservation-friendly, and accessible to certified organic producers and value-added producers. The new regulations will focus on addressing food safety risks from microbial pathogen contamination (e.g., Salmonella, E. coli O157:H7, and Shigella). The act does not address food safety risks from genetically engineered crops, pesticide use, or antibiotic resistance nor does it change food safety regulations for meat, poultry, and egg products, which are under USDA jurisdiction.

Food safety was 42% of FDA budget in the 1970s but has been reduced to less than 25% since 2003. The Food Safety Modernization Act is expected to cost \$1.4 billion over the next five years, yet only ~\$50 million was appropriated by Congress for 2012. Federal and state appropriations support the FDA food safety mission and provide an inspectional capacity of approximately 2,000 inspectors for 130,000+ domestic facilities. The USDA, which has responsibility for meat, poultry and eggs, has approximately 7,800 inspectors for 6,800 facilities, and proposed regulations would turn a sizeable portion of the inspection responsibilities over to industry inspectors. The FDA inspects only 2% of imports, which represent 15% of food supply (seafood 75-80%, fresh fruit ~50%, vegetables ~20%); however this inspection rate is tempered by the USDA-established production protocols mentioned earlier. State departments of public health officers are partners in food safety compliance, but are subject to low and decreasing levels of both state and FDA funding to conduct inspections and product sampling.

Guidance for Industry is voluntary on many issues (e.g., use of antibiotic drugs in animal production, use of Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) by food processors and restaurants). However, as with the voluntary GAP program, market conditions may stimulate adoption of voluntary procedures. Food safety regulations for farmers and processors, in many cases, are the same for producers of all sizes which is beneficial to large industrial producers. FDA has overlapping responsibilities with other agencies, especially with the USDA in the area of food safety, so that the system may not be as efficient as possible.

Interaction of Federal Agencies

In addition to the participants in food safety described above, other federal agencies such as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) also play a role. Even the Department of

Transportation (DOT) is called upon in some instances.

A detailed discussion of these interacting services is provided in an article from the *Seton Hall Law Review* entitled “Organizing Federal Safety Regulations.” The following table from that article shows the division of responsibilities by food type and agency and gives a description of each agency’s focus. Although extensive, the table is not all inclusive as it leaves out activities such as the monitoring of food borne illnesses carried out by the CDC, the USDA role in fruit and vegetable safety that goes beyond pesticide concerns, as well as some of the enforcement of food advertising and labeling functions that are carried out by other agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The table demonstrates the intricate web of authority that currently exists in food safety.

Food		Comments
Alcoholic beverages	ATF, FDA	ATF licenses and inspects breweries. FDA oversees wine coolers
Eggs	FDA, AMS, FSIS,	FDA has lead jurisdiction over shell eggs. FSIS continuously inspects egg products. AMS operates a voluntary grading program. APHIS monitors animal health
Fruits & vegetables (including GE varieties)	FDA, EPA,	EPA and USDA share pesticide regulation responsibilities. FDA enforces standards for pesticide residues on processed food. (Non-pesticide safe handling services are also provided for fruits and vegetables by AMS)
Grain	FDA,	GIPSA establishes and enforces identity standards through inspection. FDA enforces standards for pesticide residues on processed food.
Meat & poultry	FSIS, FDA	FSIS inspects meat during processing. FDA holds regulatory authority once meat leaves the slaughtering or manufacturing plant.
Processed Foods	FDA	FDA is responsible for most non-meat products.
Seafood	FDA,	FDA oversees seafood safety generally. NMFS runs a voluntary inspection service.
Water	FDA, EPA	EPA regulates tap water, FDA bottled water.

Sustainable Agriculture and a Safe Food Supply:

Part I - ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

[Ed. Note: This Fact Sheet was prepared by the LWVMC based upon research conducted for the LWVUS Agricultural Update. The LWVMC committee is: Margaret Chasson, Chair; Elaine Apter, Maxine Montgomery, Judy Morenoff, Lorna Post, Alyce Ortuzar, and Marilyn Smith. and is used with permission.]

In the early 20th century, families operated most farms using local resources and labor. The farmers recycled organic material, and used rainfall and built-in biological controls. Farms had both livestock and cropland. Farmers safeguarded production through rotating crops in space and time to reduce risk. Legumes were grown in rotation to provide inputs of nitrogen. These techniques suppressed insects, weeds and diseases by breaking the lifecycles of these pests. Only limited equipment and services were purchased off farm.

Today as more and more farmers are integrated into international economies, imperatives to diversity disappear and monocultures are rewarded by economies of scale. In turn, lack of rotations and diversification take away key self-regulating mechanisms, turning monocultures into highly vulnerable agroecosystems dependent on high chemical inputs.¹

FARM CHARACTERISTICS

In 2011, 96 % of U.S. crop farms were designated as family farms, and they accounted for 87 % of the value of crop production. In recent decades the percentage of farms designated as “family farms” has remained steady (from 97.1 % to 98.3 % of all farms from 1996 to 2011), but the definition of a family farm has changed. According to the latest USDA definition, a family farm is “any farm organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or family corporation. Family farms exclude farms organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms with hired managers.” Even very large farms, farm businesses that own or rent multiple locations, and farms managed by non-resident owners may be classified as family farms.

Both small farms and very large farms have increased in number with a decrease in midsized farms. Since 2,000, the number of small farms has increased and the USDA indicates this may reflect life style decisions and the ability to farm part time while holding an off-farm job. Small residential farms, where owners are retired or derive some of their income from off-farm work, have increased in number in recent years, as have very large farms. However, farms with at least \$1 million in sales accounted for 24 % of the value of agricultural production in 1982 and 59 % in 2007. Meanwhile the share (of sales) held by small commercial farms with \$10,000 to \$250,000 in sales fell by two-thirds.

The growth of farm size reflects a shift in agriculture production from smaller to larger commodity crop farms (field corn, soybeans, wheat, hay) referred to as cropland

consolidation. The practice of monoculture (growing a single crop intensively over a large area of land) has increased. Typically corn and soybeans are raised in rotations designed to maintain soil quality and limit pest infestations. The trend is strongest in the more rural areas of the country, most significantly in the Midwestern states. Both owned and rented property may be managed as a single farm and are so considered in USDA statistics. About 40 % of U.S. farmland has been rented over the last 25 years. In the USDA report on farm size,² the authors observe three trends in this crop consolidation:

- ✓ Four crops (field corn, wheat, hay and soybeans) accounted for over 83% of the crop acres. “Twenty-two percent of crop production occurred on farms that produced only a single commodity crop, while 30 % occurred on farms growing two crops. Only 11 % occurred on farms with five or more crops.
- ✓ The three high-value categories—vegetables and melons; fruits, nuts, and berries; and greenhouse/nursery crops—accounted for nearly 37 % of all cash receipts from crops in 2007 but less than 4 % of harvested acreage.” The high-value categories have high yield per acre and use labor and physical capital intensely.
- ✓ A long-term shift in the mix of crops is occurring with cotton, tobacco and oats decreasing and field corn, hay and soybeans increasing as well as “high-value categories.”

There are several basic advantages of size that apply to large farms including better financial performance, higher rates of

return on equity and decreased labor hours. A farm harvesting 2,000 acres uses less than half the labor of a farm harvesting 500 acres. Larger farms have 35% to 50% lower costs per acre for assets and equipment. The same cost savings apply to the fruit and vegetable operations. This huge increase in efficiency is the result of many factors, including the use of fertilizer and pesticides, introduction of farm machinery, development of hybrid strains, and increased knowledge about farm management practices producing higher yields using less labor and less land. Most of these factors and their issues are discussed under specific short agricultural update papers including soil management, animal management, pesticides, water management, plant breeding and genetic engineering found in www.mont.lwvmd.org.

This intensification of agriculture has increased environmental impacts such as potential degradation of the soil and water resources vital to both farm productivity and human health. For more information on specific environmental concerns see the updates cited above. Specifically, these impacts include:



- ✓ Environmental impacts of pesticide use, including potential damage to pollinator populations and human health implications of toxic residues in water sources
- ✓ Nitrogen run-off, resulting in impaired waterways and dead zones
- ✓ Soil erosion as a result of the loss of wind-breaks, hedge-rows, and swales
- ✓ Human health implications of pesticide and herbicide residues
- ✓ Increased reliance on irrigation that increases water usage
- ✓ Reduction in biodiversity

Some organizations suggest that the industrialization of agriculture has depleted the economic and social energy of rural America, with the loss of local food sheds, local food security, incomes, and revenues for services and infrastructure when markets for mid-sized farms contract.

Changes in Practices - Current modern practices are the result of basic changes in practices beginning around the end of World War II. These changes include:

- ✓ **Technology:** Larger production runs allow for the use of more capital equipment that increased efficiency and reduced labor. Mechanical harvesters, sprayers,

and planters saved time and labor by enhancing the ability to seed and harvest large acreages. Innovations that provide the farmers with more accurate information increase the farmer's ability to manage land without additional labor or workers

- ✓ **Chemical Pesticides:** Historically farmers have controlled plant pests through weeding or mechanical tilling, , natural soil amendments such as manure, crop rotation, tillage and leaving land fallow. The use of pesticides can significantly reduce the amount and cost of labor to complete these tasks. From 1950 to 1980 the use of pesticides rose, but leveled off after 1980 as better pesticides were developed.

- ✓ **Plant Breeding and Genetically Engineered Seeds:** Seeds designed to produce crops that better resist pests, which exhibit greater stem strength or more rapid growth, provide the farmer with more efficiency. Genetically engineered seeds are proprietary and need to be purchased every year,

✓ **Tillage Practice:** "No till" systems leave crop residue from the previous harvest on the soil. Soil is left undisturbed, not plowed or harrowed from prior harvest to planting, except for the injection of nutrients. This saves on passes of machinery. However, this practice appears to encourage more pesticide use and opponents of no-till cite thousands of years of use when animals rather than heavy machinery were used and synthetic chemicals were used less or not used at all.

- ✓ **Information Technologies:** Management practices and information technologies (IT) allow the farmers to measure and manage intra-field variations in soil attributes, pest presence, product attributes, and production outcomes.

Aging Farm Population - Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan sees an epidemic sweeping across America's farmland of aging farmers and ranchers and fewer people in line to take their place. "If we do not repopulate our working lands, I don't know where to begin to talk about the woes," she said in a recent interview.

Contract Farming and Vertical Integration - The ability of the farmer to contract with a buyer for sale of a crop before the harvest may reduce the financial risk for the farmer by providing a secure outlet for crops and price supports that may ease credit risks. Under production contracts for poultry, livestock, and even nursery plants, the buyer owns the commodity and the farmer contracts to provide the services to bring it to market. There will be a more detailed discussion

of animal management practices in a later fact sheet. A company with a related business at different points on the same production path is vertically integrated. An example is Perdue, which provides chicks to the farmer, mandates the type of feed and other practices, and then controls the processing and marketing of the broilers. Critics of this vertical system argue that the contractual farmers bear risks and costs, while control of prices paid to the farmers and most of the profit goes to Perdue.

Under more common *marketing contracts* a price, delivery outlet and quantity are set for the commodity, thus reducing risk. Usually there are specifications of acceptable product standards. Large farms are more likely to use contracts and contracts covered more than 40% of crop production in 2011.

There are concerns that contracting produces “a tilt in market power with a possible shift in bargaining power as input suppliers and output processors (and first purchasers otherwise) gain greater economic power, undoubtedly at the expense of producers. Firms not engaged in contract or ownership integration, usually smaller farms, may be unable to process or market their products or purchase needed components from firms that are vertically integrated. However, there are innovations such as mobile butchering processors that go from farm to farm and more farmers’ markets.

Organic Agriculture - The USDA defines organic as:

Organic is a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods that integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used.



The USDA provides detailed guidance relating to organic production, handling, processing, labeling, marketing, certification, allowed and prohibited substances and policies. In 2010, a mere eight years after USDA’s regulations officially went into effect, sales of organic foods and beverages were

\$26.7 billion. Organic agriculture follows practices for crop rotation, biodiversity and mixed cover crops to enhance the

health of the soil and protect the environment.

Pesticides are used in organic farming but must be natural, processed lightly, and not synthetic. Around 20 chemicals are approved for use in the USDA program. Large organic farms may be using liberal amounts, but usage is not tracked. There are some concerns about their safety. Pesticides used in conventional agriculture are often synthetic and are regulated by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). More information on pesticides is available at www.mont.lwvmd.org.

Organic farming is a growing industry that may add significantly to the development of sustainable agriculture practices. There are those that have argued for this approach exclusively. Others have insisted organic farming cannot feed the world. Organic farms are not limited to small niche farms and may become part of the large farm universe as farmers recognize the value of the products. Universities are working with farmers to improve organic methods. These and nutritional and taste issues of alternate farm systems are discussed in the nutrition section at www.mont.lwvmd.org.

Sustainable Agriculture - Examples of these practices vary depending on regional soil and weather conditions. Generally, they include crop rotation, tillage practices (animals often replace expensive machinery that can compact the soil and emit CO₂), use of cover crops, soil enrichment through plant and livestock inputs, use of natural pest predators, and bio-intensified integrated pest management² as well as use of energy conservation technology and renewable energy sources (solar water pumps).

Results of an eight-year farm study conducted in Iowa that compared two-, three-, and four-year crop rotations indicate that more diverse crop rotation systems can use smaller amounts of synthetic agrichemical inputs as powerful tools to tune, rather than drive, agro-ecosystem performance while meeting or exceeding the performance of less diverse systems. These practices also reduce freshwater toxicity.

The Union of Concerned Scientists sees four major factors in healthy farm planning: a landscape that allows for the continuous rotations of uncultivated (resting fallow) areas; crop diversity and rotation using long crop rotation; expanding crop selection to include fruits and vegetables to build diversity and improve the soil; integrating livestock to increase diversity through well-managed pastures and the availability of manure; and using cover crops to prevent exposed, bare soil, the loss of topsoil, and sediment runoff. These practices may have a lower gross return per acre, but the reduced gross income can be balanced and exceeded with

lower input costs for machinery and synthetic chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, and fuel, so that net returns can be the same or better.

THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Subsidies such as the ethanol corn subsidy of 46 cents per gallon that stopped in 2011 encouraged corn production. When that subsidy stopped, the renewable fuel standard, which mandated that at least 37 % of the 2011-12 corn crop be converted to ethanol and blended with the gasoline, kept corn prices high. Crop insurance has influenced farm growth because farmers are eligible for payouts not only when their crops fail due to drought or flood, but also when the prices of their crops decline. Critics say crop insurance has reduced the risk of farming so much that farmers are now incentivized to farm on marginal lands, such as wetlands or lands with less than optimal soil. The national Farm Credit System created by the U.S. Congress in 1916 provides a source of financing for expensive farm equipment. Conservation subsidies encourage environmentally sound practices through cost sharing. EPA's Confined Animal Feeding Operation rules induced some farmers to constrain farm size, so as to remain just small enough to evade EPA rules and regulations.

SUBSIDIES

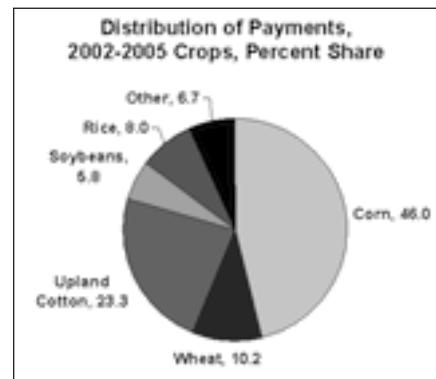
The federal government supports the agricultural sector through a variety of direct and indirect subsidies. The direct subsidies receive the most attention in the press and in Congress, because they tend to involve some type of direct payment to farmers. The government also indirectly subsidizes agriculture by funding activities such as agricultural research and development (R&D), extension programs, and maintaining agricultural databases.

Farming is an inherently risky business. Some risks relate to decisions exclusively under the farmers' control. For example, knowing how to select the best seeds for local conditions; deciding how much of which crops to plant; knowing which combination of crops can deter pests; and correctly timing the need for pesticide application or knowing how to naturally amend the soil to avoid synthetic pesticides and fertilizers are all part of the calculus. The wrong decisions can dramatically affect profitability.

However, considerable risks fall outside the farmers' control:

- ✓ Catastrophic weather events such as floods, droughts, and recent severe snowstorms in Colorado that killed thousands of cattle can be financially devastating. Even an untimely two-night freeze can wipe out an entire year's production, which happened two years ago when Michigan lost most of the fruit crops from a spring freeze.

- ✓ The availability of farm labor to harvest crops where mechanization is not used; produce can only be sold if it is harvested as it ripens; a timely harvest is critical.
- ✓ Farmers do not control the prices they are paid for commodities traded on exchanges such as the Chicago Mercantile Exchange/Chicago Board of Trade. Mainly large farms producing sugar, milk, frozen orange juice, live cattle, feeder cattle, hogs, cotton, wheat, oats, canola, corn, and soy must be vigilant about market prices for futures and options contracts in deciding when to sell. However, as described above, choices may be limited.
- ✓ The often-volatile and fluctuating price of energy affects the costs of operating machinery during planting and harvesting, synthetic (petroleum-based) inputs such as fertilizer, and transporting products to markets.



Given the uncertainty in crop and animal production as well as post-production factors, Congress has adopted a variety of agricultural subsidies. Between 1995 and 2012, the USDA farm programs paid out \$292 billion in

subsidies, of which \$17.6 billion were direct payments, \$53.6 billion were crop insurance subsidies, \$38.9 billion were conservation subsidies and \$22.5 billion were disaster relief. Ten % of the farms reportedly collected 75% of the subsidies, while 62% of the farms received no subsidies.

Direct Payment Subsidies – The direct payment subsidy which is paid at a set rate every year was established in 1996 and designed to pay out smaller amounts each year over a period of seven years at which point it would be terminated. Payments were calculated based upon a farmer's past harvests; in the future he could grow the same crops or different ones or none. In 1998 farm income fell because of drought and Congress added \$2.9 billion in extra payments and eliminated the declining payment provision. In 2002 Congress eliminated the end date. In 2008 the payments were renewed, and again in January 2013 the payments were renewed through 2013. The payment is the same each year and is not adjusted for commodity price levels.

Direct payments are cash subsidies for producers of 10 crops:

wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, oats, cotton, rice, soybeans, minor oilseeds, and peanuts. The last three were added in the 2002 farm law. Direct payments are based on a historical measure of a farm's acres used for production and are not related to current production or prices.

A recent GAO analysis found that the program subsidizes some people who are not really farmers. According to the study, over 2,000 farms receiving payments have not grown crops during the past five years. Payments have also been paid to owners living hundreds of miles from the land. Under the rules this is permitted only if the owner shares in the farm's financial risks and remains actively engaged, but these rules do not seem to be strictly enforced. A comprehensive data base on payments made under this provision as well as other subsidy payment information is online at <http://farm.ewg.org/region.php?fips=00000>

Crop Insurance – Crop insurance subsidies are a reduction



of calculated premium owed by a farmer for an insurance policy he or she voluntarily purchases. Federal crop insurance was first authorized by Congress in the 1930s in conjunction with other initiatives to help agriculture recover from the impact of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. In 1938, the Federal

Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) was created to administer crop insurance. Federal crop insurance was generally an “experiment”, providing limited coverage in limited areas for only major crops, like corn and wheat, until the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980. This Act expanded the crop insurance program to many more crops and regions and encouraged expansion to replace the free disaster coverage offered under Farm Bills in the 1960s and 1970s. To grow participation in the program, the 1980 Act subsidized 30% of the crop insurance premium owed by the farmer.

The 1994 Federal Crop Insurance Reform Act made participation in the crop insurance program mandatory for farmers to be eligible for deficiency payments under price support programs, certain loans, and other benefits. In the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) was created to administer the federal crop insurance program under the USDA. Through the Act's new requirements and geographic and crop expansion, crop insurance participation jumped to 180 million

acres of farmland insured by 1998, three times the number of acres insured in 1988.

There are currently two types of crop insurance available to United States farmers and ranchers: Federal crop insurance programs, generally discussed as multiple-peril crop insurance (MPCI), and crop insurance products that are developed and underwritten solely by private insurance companies (private products) and are not subsidized by any entity. The most common private product is crop-hail coverage.

Federal crop insurance offers separate, tailored policies for more than 100 commodities, both conventional and organic. There are 15 different plans of insurance, with six plans based on a farmer's individual historic production records, five based on an area average (a county or weather grid), two using a producer's business tax information, and two livestock plans based on a combination of market pricing and producer sale records. Within these plans, some offer yield-only coverage, some provide yield and revenue coverage, and some cover the producer's risk using a set dollar amount of insurance.

Additionally, there are several policy endorsements and options, a growing number of third-party-developed programs that are offered as a pilot program through the RMA (not all such policies are subsidized), and a variety of levels of coverage that determine what portion of the farmer's historic crop productivity he or she will “self-insure” (the deductible). All federal crop insurance policies consist of the general crop insurance provisions (basic provisions), crop-specific provisions, special provisions, and, if applicable, policy endorsements and commodity exchange price provisions. More detailed information on crop insurance is given at www.mont.lwvmd.org.

Other Insurance – Other insurance programs include:

- ✓ Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a revenue-assurance program that provides for overall profitability for a given crop if a farmer meets strict guidelines (this is paid several years after that crop year).
- ✓ Counter-cyclical payments are triggered when market prices fall below certain thresholds.
- ✓ Marketing loans offer favorable terms through loan deficiency payments (LDPs) and commodity certificates.
- ✓ Disaster assistance programs can help a farmer recoup large losses resulting from natural phenomena,

if the farmer meets the program requirements. These are disaster assistance programs. The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), in particular, was implemented to eliminate costly and difficult-to-monitor-and-administer ad hoc disaster programs.

There is considerable dissatisfaction with the current structure of the subsidies. A Food and Water Watch Fact Sheet³ describes the concerns as:

The 2002 and 2008 farm bills largely maintained the commodity programs created by Freedom to Farm. This effectively replaced the supply and price management policies in place since the 1930s with payments designed to keep farmers from going bankrupt due to low prices generated by overproduction. Since then, taxpayer money has been used to make up some of the income lost by farmers who grow commodities that get sold cheap. Instead of programs that could put a brake on collapsing prices, government payments make up the difference between the low price agribusiness pays for commodities and the farmers' cost of sowing, growing, harvesting and transporting crops. Farm programs that allow prices to fall below production costs and then pay farmers some of the difference with taxpayer dollars are really subsidizing meat packers, factory farms and food processors.

Food and Water Watch, like many other groups, wants reform rather than removal of subsidies. Critics argue that agriculture continues to be a high risk activity and a blanket removal of the farm subsidy program would hurt the small-scale, family farm sector and producers of non-commodity crops that many want to see expand and evolve into more local and regional (rather than global) food systems. (See the book *Foodopoly* for clarifications and information).

Indirect Agricultural Subsidies for Research & Development - Research is a cornerstone of economic growth and development. The federal government has played a major role in supporting agricultural research for over a century, transforming U.S. agriculture from a resource-based industry to a science-based industry. Benefit/cost analyses have shown that although it may take 20 years to realize the benefits of some agricultural R&D, such research generates social benefit-cost ratios in the range of 20:1 or higher, with about half of the total benefits accruing to farmers and the other half being shared between landlords and consumers. However, supporters of small-scale ecological farming practices disagree with what they characterize as corporate-driven research. (For example, the infamous tasteless winter tomato)

Basic and applied research and development (R&D) affecting the agricultural sector is conducted and/or funded through a number of avenues:

- ✓ Conducted and funded in-house by government agencies, such as by the USDA: Agricultural Research Service, which has more than 100 laboratories in the U.S. and overseas and the FDA National Center for Toxicological Research,
- ✓ Funded through government grants awarded by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to more than 100 land-grant universities through the 50 State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAESs); in 2009 the states provided approximately 38% of the agriculture R&D funding to the SAESs, and to other federal agencies (both within and outside of the USDA); non-profit associations; professional societies; commodity groups and grower associations; multistate research committees; private industry; citizen groups; foundations; regional centers; the military; task forces; and other groups.
- ✓ Conducted and funded by a small number of large corporations, whose R&D capability tends to dominate certain research areas. In 2010 these included eight seed-biotechnology companies that accounted for 76 % of all R&D spending; five agricultural chemical companies that were responsible for more than 74 % of that sector's R&D; and eight companies that accounted for more than 66% of animal health R&D.
- ✓ Funded by commodity groups and grower associations through check-off programs.

Funding for public agricultural R&D has steadily decreased and by 2009, real spending was 7% below the 2004 level. Based on 2009 data, \$11.1 billion was spent on agriculture R&D, just 2.8% of all U.S. spending on R&D and 1.7% of USDA's expenditures. The federal share of that agriculture spending was 11.3%; SAESs and other college and university spending totaled 31.5%; and corporate spending was 57.2%.

A recent (April 2013) paper on agricultural Research and Development (R&D)⁴ summarizes recent discussion about federal support to R&D:

- ✓ Agricultural R&D "...spending is a critical policy instrument that governments can apply to influence the path of agricultural productivity and the food and agricultural economies.
- ✓ "Agricultural R&D has consequences for food processing, nutrition, health, the agricultural workforce,

consumer and producer household well-being, rural and community development, and food safety. It can also help sustain and enhance the value of ecosystem services used in, produced by, and otherwise affected by agriculture, and can reduce negative externalities from agricultural production and other sectors of the economy.

- ✓ “Even though rates of return for productivity-enhancing research are ... high, we have seen a slowdown in both public and private spending on agricultural R&D in the United States and a diversion of public research funds away from farm productivity enhancement. Together these trends spell a further slowdown in U.S. farm productivity growth at a time when the market has begun to signal the beginning of the end of a half-century and more of global agricultural abundance.
- ✓ “It is a crucial time to rethink national food and agricultural R&D and innovation policies and reposition the U.S. food and agricultural research and innovation system to address the changing scientific and market realities in the century ahead.
- ✓ “To make informed public policy choices regarding federal roles in food and agricultural R&D requires a strategic understanding of the present patterns of investment in food and agricultural R&D in the United States and elsewhere in the world. The long lags between investing in food and agricultural R&D and realizing a social return on that investment dictate taking a very long-run perspective on these R&D spending trends, one spanning many decades, not just several years.”

Public and private research play different, though often complementary, roles:

The different roles played by public and private research are revealed to some extent by the substantial differences in the composition of the research performed by both sectors...around 44 percent of the food and agricultural research performed by the US public sector is considered “basic” research, where the notional objective is the pursuit of new knowledge or ideas without specific applications in mind. The insights gained through basic research feed into the development of future innovations and technologies that increase productivity and economic growth over the longer run. Another 47 percent of public research is classified as “applied,” or research done to meet a specific need. Only 9 percent is deemed “developmental” and directed towards the production of specific products and processes with nearer-term commercial potential. By

contrast, the National Science Foundation reports that US private research is overwhelmingly “developmental” in nature, intended to develop prototypes, new processes, or products for commercialization. Overall, 63 percent of private US R&D was of this type in 2009, with only 18 percent of private research considered applied and 19 percent considered basic.⁵

CURRENT POSITION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The current League of Women Voters’ position on Federal Agriculture Policy was announced by the National Board in October, 1988 following a two-year study. The LWVUS believes that federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, farm practices that are environmentally sound and increased reliance on the free market to determine prices.

Sustainable agriculture, Federal policy should encourage a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector. This includes promoting stewardship to preserve and protect the country’s human and natural agricultural resources.

Research and Development. Agricultural research, development and technical assistance should continue to be a major federal function. Resources should be targeted to developing sustainable agricultural practices and addressing the needs of mid-sized farms.

Agricultural Prices, The LWVUS supports an increasing reliance on the free market to determine the price of agricultural commodities and the production decisions of farmers, in preference to traditional price support mechanisms.

Agriculture and Trade. U.S. efforts should be directed toward expanding export markets for our agricultural products while minimizing negative effects on developing nations’ economies. Consistent with the League’s trade position, multilateral trade negotiations should be used to reduce other countries’ barriers and/or subsidies protecting their agricultural products.

Farm Credit. Farmers should have access to credit with reasonable terms and conditions. Federally provided farm credit is essential to maintaining the viability of farm operations when the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the credit farmers need.

Of these positions, the League believes the most essential for the future of agriculture are: encouraging sustainable agriculture; providing research, information and technical assistance to agricultural producers; and increasing reliance on the free market to determine prices.

In addition, a portion of the **Natural Resources** position states: To assure future availability of essential resources, government policies must promote stewardship of natural resources. Policies that promote resource conservation are a fundamental part of such stewardship. Resources such as water and soil should be protected. ...The federal government should provide leadership guidance and financial assistance to encourage regional planning and decision making to enhance local and state capabilities for resource management. The **Social Policy** position includes: Persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care.

The study to update these positions focuses narrowly upon current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), pesticides, agricultural water pollution, water technology, antibiotics in livestock and accurate food labeling; and upon current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agricultural industries, crop

subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process. This paper provides some information to support discussion of these latter topics

End Notes:

Altieri, Miguel A., "Modern Agriculture: Ecological Impact and the Possibilities for Truly Sustainable Farming," *Agroecology in Action*, 7/30/2000, http://nature.berkeley.edu/~miguel-alt/modern_agriculture.html

² Carolyn Dimitre, Anne Effland, Neilson Conklin, *The 20th Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy*, Economic Research Service, USDA, Economic Information Bulletin Number 3, updated May 26, 2012

³ Food and Water Watch, "Farm Subsidizes 101," Fact Sheet, February 2011, <http://documents.foodandwaterwatch.org/doc/FB-subsidies101.pdf>, accessed

⁴ Pardey, Philip G., Julian M. Alston, and Connie Chan-Kang, *Public Food and Agricultural Research in the United States: The Rise and Decline of Public Investments, and Policies for Renewal*, AGree, Transforming Food and Agriculture Policy, April 2013, p. iv, <http://www.foodandagpolicy.org/sites/default/files/AGree-Public%20Food%20and%20Ag%20Research%20in%20US-Apr%202013.pdf>

⁵ Pardey, Phillip G. and Jason M. Beddow, *Agricultural Innovation: The United States in a Changing Global Reality*, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, April 2013, http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/User-Files/File/GlobalAgDevelopment/Report/Agricultural_Innovation_Final.pdf

News From LWVUS

League Files Brief in *Kobach v. EAC* - The League of Women Voters of the United States joined with the League of Women Voters of Kansas and the League of Women Voters of Arizona to file a brief on the merits in *Kobach v. EAC* in U.S. District Court. The Leagues won a successful bid to intervene in this case after arguing that the decision of the states of Arizona and Kansas to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote impacts the work that the League does to register voters.

League Supports Smarter Sentencing Act of 2013

The League joined with other organizations in a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee urging support for S. 1410, the Smarter Sentencing Act of 2013. The legislation would provide for reduction in lengthy sentences for certain people convicted of non-violent drug offenses, thereby addressing some of the causes for the unsustainable and unnecessary growth in the federal prison population. The League's support for S. 1410 is based on the LWVUS Sentencing Policy Position adopted by delegates to Convention 2012.

LWVUS Legislative Priorities (Reminder) - In January, the LWVUS Board of Directors will be setting the League Legislative Priorities for the upcoming year. Setting these priorities for LWVUS action at the national level is an annual responsibility for the Board. Once again, the Board is soliciting suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities from members. If you are interested in making suggestions to the Board, please consider the goals and criteria as listed below. While the LWVUS has numerous positions under which we might take action, the Board must prioritize and consider those issues where we might be able to make a difference.

According to the LWVUS Impact on Issues, the goals for setting priorities to guide the LWV advocacy work are to: (1) Enhance the League's effectiveness by concentrating resources on priority issues; (2) Build the League's credibility and visibility by projecting a focused and consistent image; (3) Ensure that the League has sufficient issue and political expertise to act knowledgeably; and (4) Enable the League to manage resources effectively. In setting legislative priorities, the Board considers the following: (1) Opportunities for the League to make an impact; (2) Program decisions made at Convention and/or Council; (3) Member interest; and (4) Resources available to manage effectively.

Agriculture Update Consensus Questions for Part I

Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector

1. Should government financial support for agriculture be directed to:

- a) Subsidized agricultural credit (loans)
- c) Disaster assistance
- d) Crop insurance
- e) Farms that supply local and regional markets
- f) Subsidized implementation of best management practices
- g) Commodity crop programs, e.g., corn, soybeans, sugar, cotton, wheat
- h) Commodity livestock program
- i) Commodity dairy program
- j) Specialty crops, e.g. fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc.
- k) Other production methods, e.g. organic, hydroponic, urban, etc. farms

2. What changes should government make regarding direct payment programs to farm operators? (Note: Farm operators can be anything between family farms to huge corporations.)

- a) *Eliminate* direct payments to farm operators
- b) *Update* the rules for direct payments to farm

operators to support sustainability

- c) *Broaden* the types of farms that are eligible
- d) *Broaden* the types of crops that are eligible
- e) Effectively *enforce* existing rules

3. What changes to current crop insurance programs should government make?

- a) Extend to more types of crops
- b) Link to the use of conservation practices
- c) Limit insurance for the cultivation of marginal and environmentally sensitive land
- d) Cap amount of premium subsidy to a single farm operator (see note in question 2)

4. Should government act on any of the following?

- a) Revise anti-trust legislation to ensure competitive agricultural markets
- b) Enforce anti-trust laws as they relate to agriculture
- c) Promote alternative marketing systems, including regional hub markets, farmer cooperatives, farm markets, etc.

Report Issued Concerning Judicial Elections

“The New Politics of Judicial Elections 2011-12,” a report about state high court (mostly Supreme Courts) elections, was presented to the Criminal Justice Advisory Board during a panel discussion about the issue on October 29. The presentation was sponsored by three organizations concerned about the issue: Justice at Stake, the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, and the National Institute on Money in State Politics.

The discussion centered upon the growing use of large amounts of in-state and out-of-state (mainly the latter) money for judicial campaigns, even in those states which have merit retention (uncontested) elections.

The majority of states use what is considered to be a merit system for choosing high court justices. A state commission, usually composed of lawyers, judges and lay people, considers candidates for an open position. The preferred name or names are forwarded to the governor for a selection. The justice has either a term certain or is completing an unexpired term, after which the person must

stand for a merit retention election. Until the last few years these elections were noncontroversial. However, a combination of circumstances changed that in many states. One significant factor was the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in “Citizens United.” Another was the unanimous decision of the Iowa Supreme Court in 2009 that Iowa laws and its constitution allowed same-sex marriage. When three of those Justices came up in a merit retention election a large amount of mostly out-of-state money poured into the race to defeat the three justices.

Virginia does not use this system. Our Supreme Court is composed of seven justices elected by a majority of both houses of the General Assembly for 12-year terms.

Alicia. Bannon, the report’s main author, suggested the following key reforms to help state judicial election systems (where appropriate): stronger laws for disclosure of campaign spenders, recusal reform (where justices should bow out of participating in certain cases due to a conflict or perceived conflict of interest), public funding for judicial elections (some states have this in part), and merit-based systems for selecting justices. The full report can be found at <http://newpoliticsreport.org/>.

This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

Topic: Sustainable Agriculture and a Safe Food Supply

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the "At Large Meeting" and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of January 1, 2014, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

Saturday, February 1

10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

Packard Center
(in Annandale Community Park)
4026 Hummer Rd.
Annandale 22003
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401

Monday, February 10

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

Hunters Crossing Classroom
Spring Village Drive
Springfield 22150
Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

Tuesday, February 11

10:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)

Sully District Gov. Center
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.
Chantilly 20151
Contact: Olga, 703-815-1897

Wednesday, February 12

9:30 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon Dist. Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria 22306
Contact: Louise, 703-960-0073

9:30 a.m. McLean Day (MCL)

Star Nut Café
1445 Laughlin Ave.
McLean 22101
Contact: Peggy, 703-532-4417 or
Sharone 703-734-1048

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

8739 Cuttermille Pl.
Springfield 22153
Contact: Kathleen, 703-644-1555

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)

Reston Art Gallery at Heron House
Lake Anne Village Center
Reston 20190
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

Thursday, February 13

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

11037 Saffold Way
Reston 20190
Contact: Barbara, 703-437-0795

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

Packard Center
4026 Hummer Rd.
Annandale 22003
Contact: Nancy, 703-256-6570 or
Peg, 703-256-9420

1 p.m. Fairfax/Vienna (FX-V)

Oakton Regional Library
10304 Lynhaven Pl.
Oakton 22124
Contact: Bobby, 703-938-1486 or
Liz, 703-281-3380

7:45 p.m. Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)

Paul Spring Retirement Community
Mt. Vernon Room
7116 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria 22307
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820

March Meetings:

Sustainable Agriculture and a Safe Food Supply: Pt II



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER ©
 February, 2014
 Julie Jones, Co-President
 Helen Kelly, Co-President
 Ron Page, Editor
 Liz Brooke, Coordinator**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
 (Dues year is July 1 through June 30. Current dues year ends June 30, 2014.)

Membership Category: Individual \$65 ____; Household (2 persons-1 VOTER) \$90 __; Donation \$ ____
 Student \$32.50 ____; (Coll. Attending _____)

Membership is: New ____; Renewal ____; Reinstate ____; Subsidy Requested ____
 We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.

Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check payable to LWVFA Ed. Fund.

Please Print Clearly!

Name _____ Unit _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Phone (H) _____ (M) _____ E-Mail _____

Thank you for checking off your interests:

<input type="checkbox"/> County Govt	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence

Mail to: LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403