

Iowa Farm Bureau Priorities for 2012 Legislative Session

Written by Heather Lilienthal
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PROPERTY TAXES, REGULATORY REFORM & INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AMONG IOWA FARM BUREAU PRIORITIES FOR 2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WEST DES MOINES, IOWA – Jan. 10, 2012 – Iowa Farm Bureau will focus on property taxes, regulatory reform and infrastructure funding in the 2012 legislative session.

“A priority in 2012 will be building on our success during the 2011 session, when Farm Bureau was instrumental in providing property tax relief by leading the effort to backfill \$160 million in state money for our schools,” said Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) President Craig Hill.

Farm Bureau will protect Iowa property taxpayers as new funding mechanisms are pursued for government services, including the redesign of the mental health system. Farm Bureau will also work to ensure that commercial property tax reform measures do not create a shift to other classes of property.”

IFBF, Iowa’s largest grassroots farming organization, is also in support of long-term sustainable and equitable funding to help repair the state’s aging infrastructure. According to a recent Iowa DOT study, maintenance and repair of Iowa’s roads and bridges is falling behind. “An additional \$215 million per year is needed just to address the critical repairs to Iowa’s roads and bridges. Providing and maintaining an adequate infrastructure system, such as safe roads and bridges, is a basic function of government,” said Hill.

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IFBF will work with lawmakers again this year to strengthen legislative oversight of the rule-making process. “Our regulatory process needs reform. Unwarranted regulations add unnecessary and unexpected costs to farming. In recent years, we’ve seen numerous examples of rules developed by governor-appointed boards and commissions without the direction of the state legislature. It is important that boards and commissions do not exceed their authority by creating rules beyond federal requirements. These are decisions that should be made by the legislature,” said Hill. “Rules also need to be based on sound science to determine their need, relevance and effectiveness.”

Another priority for Farm Bureau members in the 2012 legislative session is the continued support of increased funding of science-proven conservation practices that yield real results. “Farm Bureau will continue to work for increased state funding to implement incentive-based, voluntary conservation programs. Farmers want to do more, but these programs are currently underfunded and demand for cost-share dollars exceeds available funding by more than \$15 million. We know these conservation measures work. Thanks to buffer strips, terracing and other soil-protection measures, Iowa farmers have reduced total cropland erosion in this state by over 30 percent since 1982. Farm Bureau has always supported the efforts of the Soil & Water Conservation Districts and the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship to maintain soil conservation funding,” said Hill, a Milo crop and livestock farmer.

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About Iowa Farm Bureau

The Iowa Farm Bureau Federation is a grassroots, statewide organization dedicated to enhancing the People, Progress and Pride of Iowa. More than 153,000 families in Iowa are Farm Bureau members, working together to achieve farm and rural prosperity. For more information about Farm Bureau and agriculture, visit the online media room at www.iowafarmbureau.com