

Renew Ohio 18 Agriculture Working Group focus group

March 21, 2008

Topic question: What actions, programs and opportunities can we identify that will maintain/grow the economic strength of the agricultural sector of Ohio's 18th District?

Top Responses:

- Land acquisition
- Infrastructure: transportation, communication, water, broadband, railroads
Strategic plan for improvement of our infrastructure (plan, don't just react)
- Local food--process and distribution network
- Grazing--for economic purposes
- Health care—
to help keep and bring in young farmers
Affordable health insurance and health care
- Pass Farm Bill
Continuation of a productive farm bill
- Alleviate/abolish estate tax burden
Permanent removal of inheritance tax
- Protect/find funding for county agriculture related offices

- Education
 - Educate youth to agriculture's importance
 - Consumer education in class room
 - Continued education for marketing, technology and economics in agriculture industry
 - Agricultural education for general population
 - Educating the general public concerning the importance of agriculture
- Ensure viable, legal workforce for agriculture
- Practical alternative energy
 - Regional processing development for alternative energy sources (transportation/infrastructure)
- More small, local processors
- More funding for agricultural services
- Decisions made on sound livestock science
- Aquaculture
- More agricultural research (funding and awareness)
 - Continue and expand research development to reflect production systems in eastern Ohio hill country
- Technology to produce more food
- Reuse byproducts
- Develop programs to assist processing/trading within the district/state (value added)
- More involvement of agricultural representatives on the forming of legislative decisions involving producers/agribusinesses

Idea name	Group A participant scores										N=11		# of votes	total
1) Land acquisition	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	1			8	32		
28) Infrastructure: transportation, communication, water, broadband, railroads			3	2		3	3	4	4		6	19		
11) Local food--process and distribution network				4	3				3	2	4	12		
6) Grazing--for economic purposes		3				2				5	3	10		
13) Health care--to help keep and bring in young farmers		1		1		1		5	2		5	10		
25) Raising other animals in the area (economic development)					2				3	5	3	10		
9) In regards to transition--it will help raise threshold st. tax						3		4	2		3	9		
2) Agricultural planning at local and county level (economic)	3			5							2	8		
10) Education--to help younger farmers	2	2	4								3	8		
5) Crop rotation assist.	4							3			2	7		
12) Focus on organic foods--where it comes from (economic development)					4				3		2	7		
17) Look at self-employment tax on beginning farmers			2			4					2	6		
7) Grazing--for wildlife purposes--keep animals on it						5					1	5		
20) Hill land (uses: biofuels, grazing, forestry, mining, exp., switchgrass)								2		3	2	5		
3) Forestry--for economic purposes										4	1	4		
23) Fee for splitting land							4				1	4		
24) Water/stream/creek issues			1			2				1	3	4		
26) Utility concerns		4									1	4		

19) Increase awareness in the value of land (ag. uses)	3	1	3
16) Workforce--to help keep and bring in young farmers	1	1	2
18) Property owned by state is excessive (Don't need anymore)	1	1	1
21) Relative impacts on rural vs. non		1	1
22) Farmland preservation dollars	1	1	1
4) Manage/educate land owners		0	0
8) Grazing--can help young farmers		0	0
14) Family time--to help keep and bring in young farmers		0	0
15) Profitability--to help keep and bring in young farmers		0	0
27) Concern for underground lines		0	0

25) Support equine slaughter	1	3	1	3	5
26) Control excess/nuisance wildlife	1			4	2 5
2) Encourage reduction of activist groups hurting agriculture	4				1 4
18) Increase agricultural career opportunity awareness	2		2		2 4
9) Strengthen agricultural transport infrastructure	3				1 3
10) Increased marketing of specialized agricultural products	2			1	2 3
17) Enlarge FSA financing program--higher loan limits			2	1	2 3
28) Noxious plant control by human succ recipients	3				1 3
27) Local government control of wetlands	2				1 2
16) Streamline food processing regulations					0 0
20) Education to create a better generational transfer					0 0
23) Agricultural energy incentives					0 0
24) Increase broadband availability					0 0

Idea name	Group C participant scores N=14										# of votes	total
1) Consumer education in class room	1	5		4		2	1	5			6	18
24) Alternative energy	4			2	3	1			5	1	6	16
9) More small, local processors	3		4					2		5	4	14
10) More funding for agricultural services		4				5				5	3	14
4) Decisions made on sound livestock science					5	5				3	3	13
21) Aquaculture--opportunity			3					3	3	3	4	12
8) Improved risk financing			5		1	5					3	11
18) Change laws for positive estate planning and succession					2	3	4			1	4	10
3) Universal health care	5								4		2	9
35) Support agricultural research and education					4					5	2	9
13) More done with aquaculture (funds)			3					5			2	8
7) More diversity (i.e. aquaculture)		3							4		2	7
16) Grant dollars for renewable, sustainable energy for farmers				2	3				2		3	7
22) Waste management--networking						3			4		2	7
34) Rural broadband	4	2			1						3	7
6) Conservation		1	1				4				3	6
27) US products (fish-)							1	4	1		3	6
11) Raise support prices for farmers				5							1	5
12) Government help with start up funds for farmers		5									1	5
14) Promote "Ohio Proud" program in Ohio and US				1					3		2	4

23) Utilize the services of ARS/OARDC			4	1	4
25) Income averaging		4		1	4
32) Forestry--marketing, management, etc.			3	1	2
5) More rail transportation		2		1	2
15) Preserve farm land			2	1	2
19) More information (consumer education)				2	1
26) Classroom training (STEM)			2		1
28) Agri-tourism				2	1
29) Continue and increase foreign trade			2		1
30) Wind generators, fuel cells, regulator issues addressed		1		1	2
31) Processors--more competition		2			1
2) Holistic approach to farming and energy					0
17) WIC program--coupons to buy local produce					0
20) More information on rules and regulations that affect farmers					0
33) Design ag. pro, scale appropriate					0

20) Incentives to improve distribution of renewable energy	5		1	5
29) Renewable fuels to supplement corn based ethanol		4	1	2 5
31) Formulation, growth and incentives for farmers to integrate		5		1 5
5) Continued watch over railroads	4			1 4
11) Create an insurance pool/co-op for farmers in the district			4	1 4
12) Continue to maintain Ag offices		4		1 4
18) Regulation of "new" agricultural financing institutions	2	2		2 4
21) Create a climate where people are better informed of what the farmer's share is (portion of \$ from produce that goes to farmer)	2		2	2 4
19) Organized education/communication that shows agriculture's involvement with other industries (i.e. biosecurity, energy, food safety, medicine/nutrition)			3	1 3
26) Increase funding for EQUIP and Water Quality programs			3	1 3
36) Education of agriculture for general public	1	2		2 3

37) Have more legislators in tune and in touch with the public--know priorities for the people (have more meetings like this)	3	1	3
2) Facilitate and legislate the get more Ohio products into Ohio's institutional markets	2	1	2
16) Illegal immigration (cost on local communities)	2	1	2
14) Maintain funding for extension	1	1	1
28) The Iraq War and how much good we could do with the money that we spend over there	1	1	1
34) Inclusion of commodities in farm bill for those that are not receiving the bulk of the payment (i.e. fruits/vegetables, livestock)	1	1	1
7) Promotion of locally produced products in local markets		0	0
10) New and better methods of utilizing grass (not just for beef cattle)		0	0
15) Financing to minimize risk of experimenting with organic farming in response to growing market (R&D)		0	0
17) Continue base price support on commodities		0	0

23) A way for farmers to go together for buying/selling (to get a better price, etc. "strength in numbers")		0 0
25) Farmer Market Program: support it, affordability for consumers		0 0
30) Financial viability for commercial receivers and their compliance		0 0
33) Less taxes		0 0
35) Expand Farmer's Market (permanent structure in county for farmers to sell product year round)		0 0

Idea name	Group E participant scores	N=15	# of votes	total		
12) More agricultural research (funding and awareness)	3	5 5	4 2 3	6	22	
6) Agricultural education for general population	1		3 5 5	4	14	
7) Technology to produce more food		4 3		2 5	4	14
8) Reuse byproducts	3	2	1 4 1	5	11	
5) Health care cost		3	2	1 4	4	10
17) Practical alternative energy		4 1		2 3	4	10
11) Alternative agricultural products (agricultural diversity)	5 2		3		3	10
21) Better conservation practices and policy			5	5	2	10
24) Agricultural impact on environment			4 5	1	3	10
4) Financial Education		2 2		5	3	9
14) Revenue based safety net	5			4	2	9
9) Policy to level playing field for trade with other countries	2 1		5		3	8
22) Incentives to build new processing plants			4 4		2	8
16) Sound science to make decisions	4 3				2	7
32) Better conservation programs and incentives			3 2	2	3	7
13) Use of water resources	5 1				2	6
30) Farmland preservation and land use		4	2		2	6
1) Buy local		5			1	5
3) Impact on all segments of agriculture		5			1	5
19) Cellulosic ethanol research			4	1	2	5
23) Regulatory responsibilities	3			2	2	5

26) Utilization of forage resource base through livestock	2	2	1		3	5
31) Death tax			1	1 3	3	5
2) Organics	4				1	4
10) Greater access for agricultural programs				4	1	4
33) Business climate for profits	4				1	4
18) Grain fed vs. grazed fed beef				3	1	3
25) Broadband		3			1	3
28) Work together on regulation				3	1	3
15) Concern about genetically modified foods		1			1	1
20) Methane digesters	1				1	1
27) Algae farms (CO2 consumption benefit)		1			1	1
29) Agricultural higher education					0	0

Idea name	Group F participant scores						N=11	# of votes	total
4) Regional processing development for alternative energy sources (transportation/infrastructure)	5	4	1	2	3		5	15	
9) Develop programs to assist processing/trading within the district/state (value added)	3	1		5	1	5	5	15	
10) Continue and expand research development to reflect production systems in eastern Ohio hill country	2				5	5	2	4	14
8) More involvement of agricultural representatives on the forming of legislative decisions involving producers/agribusinesses			5	5			3	3	13
22) Educating the general public concerning the importance of agriculture	3		1	4	2	3		5	13
5) Increase education concerning programs available	4				4		4	3	12
20) Enhance technological infrastructure	5	5				2		3	12
17) Expand transportation (particularly rail) to facilitate the marketing of grains, energy products/biomass				3		4	4	3	11
2) Increase access to broadband in rural parts of the district			3				4	2	7
23) Making the state more business friendly	4	3						2	7
3) Availability of resources for alternative energy	1						5	2	6

12) Restructure conservation programs that protect natural resources without forcing farmers out of production		5		1		2	6
14) Make agricultural community an active voice in economic development		2	1	1	2	4	6
11) Immigration reform		4			1	2	5
7) Limits on government regulations	1				3	2	4
16) Assist Ohio Agriculture identify unique products and to efficiently market them			4			1	4
21) Look at developing economies of scale		3				1	3
24) Workforce development for the high school, vocational, adult and two-year technical level (Perkins loan?)				3		1	3
15) Expand opportunities for farmland preservation			2			1	2
19) Secure funding to maintain or create high school agricultural programs					2	1	2
25) Maintenance and repair of current infrastructure		2				1	2
26) Grants and funding for start-up	2					1	2
18) Affordable crop insurance/risk management				1		1	1
1) Combine local markets with national markets						0	0

6) Increase mainstream media coverage on the positives of the agricultural community		0	0
13) Develop programs that combine financial end with agricultural end		0	0