



# THE VOTER

FEBRUARY 2014 Vol. 41, No 2

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

## Co-President's Message

### What is the #1 industry in South Carolina?

To the surprise of many South Carolinians, it is Agribusiness! This recent announcement by SC Commissioner Hugh Weathers was based on a study Miley, Gallo and Associates conducted for the Palmetto Agribusiness Council. The Agribusiness sector accounts for an economic impact of \$33.9 billion a year in South Carolina. The top agriculture commodity contributing to over 30% sales is broilers (meat chickens). However, SC has many other agricultural products including the only tea farm in North America, various grains and beans, multiple fruits and vegetables (SC ranks #2 nationally in peach production) and other specialty crops including exotic mushrooms, ginkgo and pecans. Our state is fortunate to have forests covering 2/3 of its total land. Timber is the third largest employer and the third highest payroll of SC manufacturing industries.



On the national level, the LWVUS is interested in the policies affecting agriculture in all states and adopted agriculture as the topic for this year's consensus study. LWVUS designated January-April this year as the time for local leagues to conduct "The Agriculture Update Consensus Study". The Clemson Area LWV program for February will consist of gathering input and information from all our members and answering a set of questions put forth by the national League concerning agricultural policy. It has been more than 20 years since the League updated their position on agriculture, and many changes have occurred in the implementation of agriculture since that last study. Updates will focus narrowly on current technology issues such as GMOs, herbicides, pesticides, sustainable farming, water pollution, antibiotic use and food labeling. Also included in the study is current agriculture financing issues and crop subsidies.

Advances in technology and climate change are influencing the way farmers produce the food we consume. We need to understand how these changes might impact our health, the environment and the economy. Please take some time to review the Consensus Questions listed in this newsletter as well as the information in the links provided. We look forward to your input at the February meeting!

Yours in League,

*Sandra*

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## THE VOTER

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## UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, February 1	<b>National Program Planning</b> , Ole Sandwich Shoppe, Seneca, 11:00 am
Tuesday, February 11	<b>LWVCA Board Meeting</b> , Clemson Community Room, 5:30 pm
Tuesday, February 18	<b>General Meeting, Consensus on Agriculture Policy</b> , OLLI, social at 7:00 pm, Program at 7:30 pm
Saturday, February 22	<b>Fourth Annual Wine Event</b> , Calhoun Bridge Center, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

### February General Meeting: “CONSENSUS ON AGRICULTURE POLICY”

The February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting is our opportunity to provide input into revising and expanding the League’s position on agricultural policy. In 1986, the League undertook a two-year study and member agreement process on the role of the federal government in U.S. agriculture policy, resulting in a position on agriculture policy that supports policies for sustainable agriculture and action to reduce the use of toxic chemicals on the farm. The League also supports targeting research programs and technological assistance to mid-sized farms and to sustainable agriculture. The position supports “decoupling” (moving away from direct payments based on production) in favor of greater reliance on the free market to determine prices. The League supports federally provided farm credit, but believes the federal government should be the lender of last resort. The League position does not address supply controls, capping payments to farmers, protecting farm income or any particular commodity program. It supports the conservation reserve program and opposes the removal of lands prematurely from the conservation reserve. A lot has happened in the last 26 years that calls for a re-examination of our position.

Agricultural Policy Position and consensus questions continue on page 3.

## Fourth Annual Wine Event



### Wines from California

Food Theme – Anything Goes

Saturday, February 22, 2014, 6 – 8:00 pm

Morrison Auditorium at Calhoun Bridge Center  
212-216 Butler St., Clemson

Tickets are \$30 per person or 4 for \$100

Wines and Presentation provided by David  
Moore, Palmetto Spirits, Hwy 123, Seneca

Reservations due by Tuesday, Feb. 18 RSVP to  
William Hare, Treasurer, P.O. Box 802, Clemson,  
SC 29633 or [wrhare@earthlink.com](mailto:wrhare@earthlink.com) or 654-4417

Proceeds benefit LWVCA. Donations gratefully  
accepted

~Submitted Dianne Haselton

# CONSENSUS ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

## ***Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policy, as Announced by National Board, October 1988:***

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-size 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.

Here are the questions we will be addressing at the February meeting.

### **Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector**

1. *Should government financial support for agriculture be directed to*
  - *Subsidized agricultural credit (loans)*
  - *Disaster assistance*
  - *Crop insurance*
  - *Farms that supply local and regional markets*
  - *Subsidized implementation of best management practices*
  - *Commodity crop programs, e.g., corn, soybeans, sugar, cotton, wheat*
  - *Commodity livestock program*
  - *Commodity dairy program*
  - *Specialty crops, e.g. fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc.*
  - *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.*
  - *Eliminate direct payments to farm operators*
  - *Update the rules for direct payments to farm operators to support sustainability*
  - *Broaden the types of farms that are eligible*
  - *Effectively enforce existing rules*
3. *What changes to current crop insurance programs should government make?*
  - *Extend to more types of crops*
  - *Link to the use of conservation practices*
  - *Limit insurance for the cultivation of marginal and environmentally sensitive land*
  - *Broaden the types of crops that are eligible*
  - *Cap amount of premium subsidy to a single farm operator*
4. *Should government act on any of the following?*
  - *Revise anti-trust legislation to ensure competitive agricultural markets*
  - *Enforce anti-trust laws as they relate to agriculture*
  - *Promote alternative marketing systems, including regional hub markets, farmer cooperatives, farm markets, etc.*

### **Animal Management**

5. *Which of the following approaches to animal management should government achieve?*
  - *Transparently collect and disclose data about regulated animal feeding operations (AFOs) or aquaculture operations and about the health of animals in such regulated operations*
  - *Apply and enforce existing clean air and clean water regulations to animal or seafood management facilities*
6. *Which of the following approaches to animal waste management should government require or bring about?*
  - *Treat animal waste with environmentally sound technologies for all regulated AFOs*
  - *Prioritize federal funds to mitigate existing environmental challenges (such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program, cost share, loans, etc.) rather than construction of new facilities*

# CONSENSUS ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

## **Research and Development**

7. Which of the following approaches to research and development (R&D) should government fund or accomplish?
- Basic research
  - Independent third-party (such as an academic institution) risk assessment of products developed using any new technology
  - Research to assess the impacts of new technologies on human health and the environment, prior to their widespread adoption
  - Research that advances the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems
  - Seed banking, research, and other means that promote and preserve genetic diversity
  - Both transparency in the reporting of research studies related to approval of new products **and** respect for intellectual property rights of private enterprises engaged in research
  - Research on long-term effects of new crops, products and processes
  - Development of new practices and technologies to promote conservation for all types of farms

## **Food Safety**

8. Which of the following approaches to food safety should government perform or fund?
- Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for new foods and food additives developed using any new technology
  - Require developers to monitor all food products developed using any new technology after releasing to the market
  - Withdraw marketing approval if products are shown to be unsafe
  - Require post-market monitoring of approved pharmaceutical applications in animal production for human health and environmental impacts
  - Require developers of new products to provide data and other materials to independent third-parties (such as academic institutions) for pre- and post-market safety assessment as appropriate
  - Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to treat and control disease
  - Fund independent third-party (such as academic institutions) risk assessment of long-term and multiple exposures from foods on human health and the environment
  - Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers)
  - Fund, train and add personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies

## **Food Labelling**

9. How sufficient are the following regarding current food labeling?
- Nutrition Facts on food labels
  - Nutrition Facts on food labels as a means of consumer education
  - Common allergen labeling
  - Health and ingredient claims that consumers can understand
10. Which of the following should government achieve regarding marketing and ingredient claims on food labels?
- Define (and approve for use) health and safety marketing terms (e.g. immunity support, humane, pasture-raised, natural, etc.)
  - Regulate the use of images or other sensory advertising
  - Require that ingredient marketing claims accurately represent what is in the required ingredient list
11. Recognizing that each food developed using any new technology can be unique, and assuming that required food labeling should be useful to consumers, should the following generalized information relating to how products or components are developed be presented on food labels
- Does **not** contain ingredients developed using any new technology
  - If meat, fish, eggs, or dairy products are from animals that have consumed feed developed using any new technology stating which technologies are involved
  - Contains ingredients developed using any new technology stating which technologies are involved

Some suggested sites with informational reading material to assist in getting ready for the February Consensus meeting on Agriculture are:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/ERP-2013/ERP-2013-chapter8/content-detail.html>  
[http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/food\\_and\\_agriculture/The-Healthy-Farm-A-Vision-for-US-Agriculture.pdf](http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/food_and_agriculture/The-Healthy-Farm-A-Vision-for-US-Agriculture.pdf)  
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=organic-farming-yields-and-feeding-the-world-under-climate-change&page=2>  
[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF\\_RESOURCES](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_RESOURCES)  
<http://sustainableagriculture.net/about-us/what-is-sustainable-ag/>

~Submitted Holley Ulbrich



## Election Directors Explain Election Mechanics

On January 21, the League posed questions to elections directors Joy Brooks (Oconee County) and Rodney Allen (Pickens County) and poll-worker, Diana Hancock. April Bagwell, Office Coordinator for the Pickens County Elections Commission, took photos, which will be forwarded to the State Elections Commission (SEC). The SEC will issue photo IDs. Nine photos were taken for Pickens County voters and five for Oconee County voters.

Answering a question about how to minimize long waits at the polls, the panel recommended avoiding voting at 7 a.m., noon, or 5 p.m. because these times had the longest lines.

The panelists asked that we consider volunteering during the period of in-person absentee voting and on Election Day. Mr. Allen explained that Ms. Bagwell is the only staff employee in his office and that many more workers are needed to staff an election. Poll workers must be registered to vote in South Carolina and reside in the county they will work in or in an adjacent county. Poll workers receive two training sessions: one on procedures and one on the voting equipment.

Topics included voting fraud (none found), voter turnout, the photo ID requirement, provisional ballots, voting in primary elections and the filing process for candidates.

*~Submitted Eleanor Hare*



Joy Brooks, Rodney Allen and Diana Hancock

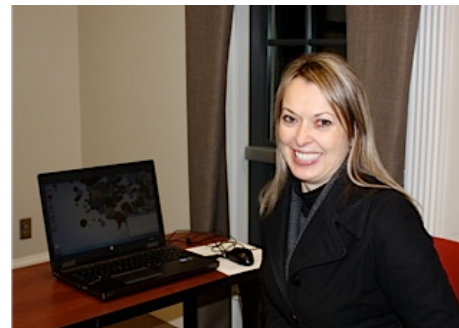
## Truthful Tuesday Report

*On Tuesday, January 14, state legislators met for the first day back in session and some 400 South Carolinians met on the north side of the State House for a Truthful Tuesday rally with the theme "enough is enough!" About 25 people from Seneca and Clemson traveled together; a handful were League members. Our messages concerned Medicaid expansion, supporting education and voter rights.*

*A dozen speakers came to this well-organized event to deliver their messages. Their "podium" was a rolled-in coffin that represented the 1300 people that would die this year because SC didn't accept federal money to expand Medicaid. The speakers included a Charleston resident who was denied coverage and a South Carolina physician who explained why Medicaid was a smart investment. Jackie Hicks, the President of SCEA spoke on the benefits of funding K-12 and Lonnie Randolph, the President of SC NAACP spoke about "The real voter fraud" and introduced an elderly gentleman who ran into several seemingly unreasonable roadblocks in his attempts to get appropriate Voter ID.*

*Learn more at [www.truthfultuesday.net](http://www.truthfultuesday.net) and find out how you can get involved.*

*~Submitted Paula Appling*



April Bagwell



## Report on Oconee Legislative Annual Meeting

The Oconee Legislative Delegation had its annual meeting on Monday, January 6, 2014 at the Seneca City Council Chambers. This time was 2-3 weeks earlier than was previously held, reason given was that the delegation would like to get input from the community before the legislative session began the following week. Legislators present were Senator Thomas Alexander, Rep. Bill Sandifer, and Rep Bill Whitmire. League members present were Reggie Turetzky, Janie Shipley and Sandra Gray. The meeting was poorly attended with less than 20 attendees and several members of the press. Although Reggie and I both called the Legislative Delegation office and requested to speak, we were told that the time to sign up to be on their agenda had passed and would be up to the delegation to decide if we could make our statements at the meeting.

All three legislators stated that their priority was with road repair and construction. Another priority mentioned by Sandifer was the ethics reform bill.

Unfortunately, only 2 people present were on the agenda and allowed to speak. Ward Fetrow of Tamassee spoke about the need to fix the roads and pointed out that multiple state agencies, such as the Palmetto Railways, has excess money and these monies could best be used to fix the roads. He said that the state had money, but had it priorities wrong. He suggested that the state eliminate its sales tax. Susie Cornelius from Walhalla complained of an uneven tax burden and said she thought the tax assessments were unfair to residents and small businesses. Although the meeting lasted less than 20 minutes, the delegation still would not allow us to speak, because we had not signed up by the January 2 deadline. The delegation did not take questions from the attendees but did offer to stay around after the meeting was adjourned to talk with individuals. Rep. Sandifer said they would consider changing this format next year and allow people to speak as time allowed whether they had notified the delegation office or not. We were allowed to submit our written statements to the legislative secretary who would distribute copies to the legislators after the meeting.

Following the meeting, I had an opportunity to speak with Thomas Alexander about the flow control legislation, Bill H3290, which would prevent public ordinances from managing the flow of waste that comes into a county. He stated that although it had passed the House, the Senate had modified it and that, in his opinion, it was not as strong and would not allow waste outside the state to be dumped in SC. He also stated that this bill is not considered a priority in the Senate this year and may not even come up for debate. My impression was that he would support the bill as it reads now. I later tried to read the bill with its modifications and did not see where there was anything in it that would prevent out of state trash being dumped in SC. Perhaps we should ask Lynn Teague to look at this for us. Alexander did state that he was going to push for the ethics reform bill to be passed.

Rep. Sandifer was elected as chair of the Oconee Delegation for 2014. ~Submitted by Sandra Gray

### CALL TO ACTION: Oppose HB 3943 and SB 300

#### Talking points:

- Common Core Standards were developed by two bi-partisan national groups: The National Association of State Governors and the National Association of Chief State School Officers, in extensive collaboration with professional teaching associations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, The National Council of Teachers of English, and the International Reading Association together with input from parents, teachers, and business leaders across the country.
- South Carolina adopted Common Core Standards in 2010 after extensive study and review by the State Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee (a bi-partisan group created by the legislature to guide and guard public education in SC), and the State Board of Education, whose members are selected from all points of the state.
- Most South Carolina School districts have already implemented Common Core Standards.
- Common Core standards are politically neutral. They cover currently only the areas of reading/language arts and mathematics. South Carolina will continue to use its own excellent state standards for all subject areas not covered by Common Core such as science and social studies.
- While certainly rigorous, tankards are developmentally appropriate for each age level. Remember we want our children to be competitive at the global level.
- The best way to learn about Common Core Standards is to read them yourself at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

## Common Core Standards: What Is It? Will It Work?

The “South Carolina State Board of Education adopted Common Core Standards in 2010. They did so after extensive review by the State Department of Education involving educator and stakeholders around the state.”<sup>1</sup> Each state has the option to adopt the standards or not. “More than half of the school districts in SC have already implemented state standards and the rest have begun the process.” Pickens County School District has adopted the Common Core Standards.

What other states have adopted the voluntary standards? “A total of 45 state, including South Carolina.”<sup>2</sup>

What are the Common Core Standards? At this point they focus exclusively on developing mastery of core skills in reading/language arts and mathematics at each grade level, K-12.

Why set up standards? Standards are nothing new. Over the past 100+ years, school districts established requirements. Later states set up their own requirements. Finally, the No Child Left Behind program was the first to identify standards throughout the United States and to set goals for their implementation and success. Children, parents, and teachers are used to high school national testing programs such as the ACT, the PSAT, and the SAT which measure and compare students language and mathematical abilities for admission to college and technical training programs.

There are at least three reasons to establish a national competency program: 1) Children and families move from state to state and can adjust more quickly to a new school district if there are national core standards in place. 2) As has been reported extensively in the national press, American students are falling behind other countries in the mastery of language arts and math (science standards will be identified later). This is hampering job success and our country’s ability to compete internationally. 3) Students need basic skills to enter the American workforce at any level (including entry-level customer service and manufacturing jobs).

What Common Core Standards are not:

- This is not a federal program. This is not a program that comes from President Obama. The Standards were “developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers” with input from teachers, parents, the community.
- Common Core Standards do NOT “tell teachers what to teach or how to teach it. They are standards, not a curriculum.”

“SB 300 and HB 3943, currently on the calendar for the 2013 legislative session, would void the states adoption of Common Core Standards and ban the Department of Education from enacting them.” There are a number of legislators who are opposed to implementing the Standards. Dr. Mick Zais, Superintendent of Education for SC, opposes Common Core.

For more information, please read the articles below.

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<sup>1</sup> LWV SC Voter, Vol. 63, Issue 2. Fall 2013

<sup>2</sup> Greg Oliver, *The Journal*. December 24, 2013, p A3

Clemson City Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:30 pm.  
 Seneca City Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 pm.  
 Pickens County Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:00 pm.  
 Oconee County Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 pm.

Anderson County Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 pm  
 Pickens County School Board 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, 7:30 pm.  
 Oconee County School Board 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 6:00 pm.  
 Anderson Co. School Board 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 6:00 pm

### Contribution Form

**League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (opt) \_\_\_\_\_

I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "*League of Women Voters Ed Fund*" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

P. O. Box 802  
Clemson, SC 29633

[Recipient]

Address Line 1  
 Address Line 2  
 Address Line 3  
 Address Line 4