

RESOURCES FOR THE AGRICULTURE POSITION UPDATE – provided by the LWVUS Agriculture Update Committee

Agriculture has changed dramatically since the League of Women Voters developed its Agriculture Position in 1988. <http://www.lwv.org/content/agriculture-policy> Below is a listing of documents and multimedia to provide useful background for members that are not familiar with agriculture issues as we prepare to update the position in late-winter 2014.

DOCUMENTS

1. The first recommendation is the administration's perspective on the key agricultural policy issues that need to be addressed in 2013 as reported in *Challenges and Opportunities in U.S. Agriculture* (Chapter 8 of the *Economic Report of the President-2013*). Although the content of this 28-page report goes beyond the specific topics in the Update Scope, the Committee considers it an excellent introductory document offering background on such topics as the role of agriculture in the U.S. economy, structural changes that have taken place since the 1920s, the development of new markets (e.g., organic, local), the contribution of research and development to productivity growth, agriculture in world trade, and the challenges of agricultural risk management. The document can be downloaded in PDF using the following link: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/ERP-2013/ERP-2013-chapter8/content-detail.html>
2. The second document is a Union of Concerned Scientists policy brief entitled *The Healthy Farm: A Vision for U.S. Agriculture*. This is an 8-page position statement by the UCS and is, therefore, not entirely neutral. We selected it because it looks at farming from a variety of perspectives (production, economics, and environment) and a variety of farming systems (industrial, conventional, organic, etc.), offering examples of technologies and management practices able to contribute to the UCS vision of a healthy farm. The report contains many useful references and links. http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/food_and_agriculture/The-Healthy-Farm-A-Vision-for-US-Agriculture.pdf
3. The third document is a short article from Scientific America entitled *Will Organic Fail to Feed the World?* The article presents a summary of a recent analysis of 66 studies comparing conventional and organic methods for 34 different crop species. There are numerous live links providing definitions of terms and additional reading. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=organic-farming-yields-and-feeding-the-world-under-climate-change&page=2>

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES --

Below are some example multimedia resources. These are not meant to endorse any particular practice or viewpoint, but to give you an indication of the breadth of the topics. Please feel free to share your thoughts on the Agriculture Update Forums

at forum.lwv.org.

AQUACULTURE

Mote Aquaculture Farm (video 7:28 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XwLGE0Q5_o

Salmon farming in British Columbia (video 5:58)

<http://salmonfarmers.com/virtual-video>

By the BC Salmon Farmers Association

Farmed Salmon: Unhealthy and Unsustainable, Ocean Futures Society,
(video 5:13 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YD9KDE92J8>

ORGANIC FARMING

USDA Certified Organic Farm, Spring Chicken Media, (video 9 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5Fappg2caw>

Joel Salatin Polyface Farm (by USA Today) (video 4:02 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxTfQpv8xGA>

Covers the system he employs on his farm from beef, to broilers, to laying hens and pigs
See also the first part of 2008 Food for Thought lecture at Oregon State Univ. below
under Sustainable Agriculture.

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD

The Eyes of Nye - Genetically Modified Foods (video 24:58 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKm2Ch3-Myg>

Good “primer” on the concept of genetically engineered foods – it’s presented by Bill Nye in a comprehensively broad, simplified and even entertaining manner, making it viewer friendly. Disclosure: At the end, he does endorse farming responsibly, testing each case and labeling foods.

Wikipedia article on the genetically modified food controversies that seems to include most points of view

(text) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetically_modified_food_controversies

See also middle part of the 2008 Food for Thought lecture at Oregon State Univ. below
under Sustainable Agriculture.

NANOTECHNOLOGY

Nanotech Risks, Discovery Channel, 2009 (video 2:10 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc0KLV8CW08>

Andrew Maynard, chief science advisor for the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, talks to Jorge Ribas about the technology's risks

Agricultural nanotechnology and the future of food, webinar by the Institute for Trade and Agriculture Policy, May 2013 (video 57:43 minutes).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0R9az7P6h0>

Technical webinar about nanotechnology applications in food and farming, potential risks, and regulatory recommendations

LABELING

U.S. FDA Food Labeling Regulations (English) (video 3:46 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJhZWXXAndko>

This is a brief video introduction on the various components of U.S. FDA Food Labeling Regulations. Its audience is to give producers an understanding of regulations but I think the info is appropriate for our population.

Commonwealth Club of California Oct. 2012 panel on Prop. 37: "GMO: Label or Not?" (audio 1:10 hours)

<http://www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2012-10-25/gmo-label-or-not>

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

2008 Food for Thought lecture at Oregon State Univ. (video 1:24 hours)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WP-QSGrTu7s>

UC Davis genetic engineering expert, Professor Pamela Ronald, and her organic farmer husband, Raoul Adamchak, discuss how the best practices of both organic farming and genetic engineering can be used together to improve farming. Note: the lecture can also be searched through the “transcript” button for key terms and what times they are covered in the video – it appears to be voice recognition, so is not 100% accurate, but is still a very neat feature.

Out to Pasture: The future of farming (video 34:11 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrRqi8-Y8ak>

Out to Pasture contrasts industrial-style confined animal production with farms that raise food animals outdoors in diversified operations, striving to be sustainable.

Who Killed the Honey Bee? (BBC Documentary) (video 58:50 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjef4QiKWfg>

An investigation into colony collapse disorder and die-offs of bees

CROP INSURANCE

Crop Insurance 101 (video 3:35 Minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TixSJUh6YM>

Tom Zacharias, President of NCIS, explains the basics of crop insurance

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

Michigan Farmer Fights Livestock Factory Farm Pollution (video 3:06minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6iAhrP0-rY>

Beef Documentary (video 6:33 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onITAppbWyE>

Uploaded on Sep 21, 2011. Farmers discussing the science behind a cattle feedlot and the care involved in raising the cows. The environmental practices they observe and are constantly improving upon are showcased.

Inhumane Feed Lot Beef vs. Humane Grass Fed Beef (video 3:31 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUDCh7nSUEQ>, FOX News segment discussing health and practice differences (some graphic scenes)

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Living Downstream from a Pig Farm (video 3:01 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eu15Mf696zI>

Hog Production at Smithfield Farms (video 4:11 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOboXPYWetk>

Undercover at Smithfield Foods (video 3:36 minutes)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_vqIGTKuQE

Humane Society discussion of Smithfield gestation crates