

Hillary Clinton on Farm, Food and Rural Policy Issues:

Animal rights:

Clinton was an advocate for animal welfare when she served in the Senate, earning ratings from the Humane Society of the United States of [75 percent](#) and [83 percent](#) respectively, her last two years in the chamber.

As a senator, she co-sponsored the [Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act](#) to ban the slaughter of livestock unable to walk and [amendments to the Horse Protection Act](#) to prevent slaughtering horses for human consumption.

Biotechnology:

In a [2014 speech](#) to the Biotechnology Industry Organization, Clinton endorsed the use of agricultural biotechnology. “I stand in favor of using seeds and products that have a proven track record. ... There’s a big gap between what the facts are and what the perceptions are.”

She noted that when she was secretary of state, the State Department encouraged other countries to allow the use of genetically engineered crops. However she said that winning acceptance for biotechnology takes a “painstaking farmer by farmer, government by government effort.”

She also said that industry needed to improve its communication about the technology. “‘Genetically modified’ sounds Frankenstein-ish. Drought-resistance sounds like something you want.”

In response to a survey by the American Farm Bureau Federation (below), Clinton indicated support for the bipartisan GMO disclosure bill enacted this summer. “Hillary understands the need for a national solution to the GMO labeling question -- one that provides consistency to food companies and consumers across state lines. And she is glad Republicans and Democrats have worked together to build a bipartisan solution to this issue,” the campaign said.

Environmental/ Regulatory issues and the EPA:

Clinton’s [climate policy](#) includes a pledge to defend the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan, which imposes controls on carbon emissions from electric utilities.

She also has proposed to negotiate a North American Climate Compact with Mexico and Canada that would contain “ambitious national targets, coordinated policy approaches, and strong accountability measures to catalyze clean energy deployment, reduce energy costs, cut greenhouse gas emissions, guide infrastructure investment, and make our integrated energy and vehicle markets cleaner and more efficient.”

She stopped short of proposing a tax on carbon to lower emissions. She supported a cap-and-trade program during her presidential campaign in 2008. Her current policy relies on providing grants and other incentives to increase renewable energy usage, and she would create a National Infrastructure Bank for funding energy projects and other needs. She also would use

USDA's Rural Utilities Service to promote renewable energy development.

She has set a goal of generating enough “clean renewable energy to power every home in America” within 10 years of her taking office. She is proposing to increase solar power capacity by 700 percent by 2020.

With regard to wildlife protection, the Clinton argues for encouraging farmers and ranchers to take voluntary measures that can avoid the necessity of listings under the Endangered Species Act. In answering the Farm Bureau survey, her campaign said she will “increase both the availability and accessibility of funding to incentivize voluntary private conservation. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), for example, can be used as “a ‘one-stop shop’ to help farmers and ranchers identify programs that can provide financial support for their conservation practices.”

With regard to the Obama administration's “waters of the United States” rule defining the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, the Clinton campaign promised the Farm Bureau only that it would honor “longstanding exemptions for common farming practices” and would “continue pushing for clarity within the law.” That is essentially the same policy as the Obama administration.

Farm bill:

Clinton voted for the final version of the [2002](#) farm bill and voted to override a presidential veto of the [2008 legislation](#). (She did not vote on the 2008 farm bill conference report.) During debate on the 2002 bill, she was also part of an informal group of eastern senators known as the [Eggplant Caucus](#) that advocated for reform of farm programs. The senators [pushed to expand farm program benefits](#) beyond traditional Midwestern and southern row crops.

Clinton, who was campaigning for president at the time, [said the 2008 farm bill](#) would help to revitalize rural America, provide a safety net for our family farms, and bolster nutrition programs for needy families across the country. The bill includes new reforms to farm subsidies, along with disaster relief, country of origin labeling, support for renewable energy advances and resources to deploy broadband in rural areas.

Clinton's [rural development policy](#) would build off existing farm bill programs and includes increased funding for beginning farmers and local food production. According to her campaign, Clinton is pledging to expand funding for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program as well as the Farmers Market Promotion Program and the Local Food Promotion Program to expand food hubs, farmers markets and encourage direct sales to local schools, hospitals, retailers and wholesalers. She also will “ensure the definition of ‘actively engaged’ in production agriculture is not overly broad and subject to abuse.”

During an August 26, 2015 speech in Ankeny, Iowa, Clinton said: “As president, I’ll make sure that federal resources like disaster assistance and crop insurance go to farmers and ranchers who need it the most, not those who have the biggest businesses or the best connections. We will change the formula.”

The campaign also promises to “fully fund a program that provides assistance to producers who conserve and improve natural resources on their farms,” a reference to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and to double loan guarantees for bio-based products.

Immigration and labor:

As a senator in 2007 she cosponsored the [Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security AgJOBS\) Act](#), which would have streamlined and expanded the H-2A agricultural visa program and allowed farmworkers who are in the country illegally to become permanent residents through continued agricultural work. The H-2A program

Clinton supports President Obama’s DACA and DAPA programs that would defer action against some children and adults who are in the country illegally. And she has gone even further by saying she would allow all illegal immigrants to stay in the country except for criminals. She wants to allow illegal immigrants to qualify for health insurance via the Affordable Care Act exchanges. She also supports providing illegal immigrants with a path to citizenship.

“As president, Hillary will fight for comprehensive immigration reform that provides a full and equal path to citizenship, treats every person with dignity, upholds the rule of law, protects our borders and national security, and brings millions of hardworking people into the formal economy.” - [campaign policy statement](#).

Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and Energy:

Clinton supports the Renewable Fuel Standard. During an August 2015 speech, she called for capitalizing on rural America’s strength in renewable energy. “Over the past decade, American wind power workforce has grown 10-fold and domestic renewable fuels production has expanded more than 350 percent -- creating jobs, boosting farm incomes and driving billions of dollars of investment into rural communities,” she said.

Clinton proposed [strengthening the Renewable Fuels Standard](#) “so that it drives the development of advanced cellulosic and other advanced biofuels, protects consumers, improves access to E15, E85 and biodiesel blends, and provides investment certainty.” “The Renewable Fuel Standard can continue to be a powerful tool to spur the development of advanced biofuels and expand the overall contribution that renewable fuels make to our national fuel supply,” [Clinton wrote in a guest editorial](#).

“But we also can’t ignore significant changes to the energy landscape since the RFS was expanded in 2007. We have to get the RFS back on track in a way that provides investors with the certainty they need, protects consumers, improves access to E15, E85, and biodiesel blends, and effectively drives the development of cellulosic and other advanced biofuels.”

She also said her goal is to have more than a half a billion solar panels installed in this country by the end of her first term and produce enough clean, renewable energy to power every home in America within 10 years of taking office.

She would create a Strategic Energy Fund that would provide \$50 billion for research, development and deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency, ethanol, and other

homegrown biofuels.

Rural development

Clinton's [rural policy](#) calls for increased funding for beginning farmers and local food production. "Hillary will increase funding to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers, invest in expanding local food markets and regional food systems, and provide a focused safety net to assist family operations that truly need support during challenging times." (See more above under "farm bill")

Trade:

Clinton opposes the Trans-Pacific Partnership. [She said it didn't include acceptable provisions](#) to combat currency manipulation, and that pharmaceutical companies would unfairly gain from the agreement at the expense of consumers.

"I have said from the very beginning that we had to have a trade agreement that would create good American jobs, raise wages and advance our national security. I still believe that's the high bar we have to meet," she said.

Taxes:

She has pledged not to raise taxes on families making under \$200,000 a year. "Because I don't think we should be imposing new big programs that are going to raise middle class families' taxes," she said during [the third Democratic debate in December 2015](#). "We just heard that most families haven't had a wage increase since 2001. Since, you know, the end of the last Clinton administration when incomes did go up for everybody."

She has proposed increasing taxes on investors. Short-term gains of one to two years would be taxed at 39.6 percent, [according to the Tax Foundation](#). Gains of two to three years would be taxed at 36 percent. The rate would gradually fall to 20 percent on gains of six years or more. Under current law, gains on the sale of assets held more than a year are taxed at 20 percent.

As a senator, Clinton voted against then-President George W. Bush's tax cuts in 2001. The legislation lowered all tax rates for individuals, with the top rate dropping from 39.6 percent to 35 percent.

In 2005, she voted "yes" on extending the first round of Bush tax cuts in 2011, some of which were set to expire. While not in favor of the tax cuts for the wealthy and the reduction in the top rate for qualified dividends and capital gains, Clinton said she voted yes in order to extend increased Section 179 expensing limits and the itemized deduction for state and local sales taxes, while also expanding the AMT exemption to prevent middle-class creep of the alternative minimum tax.

Clinton's response to questions from the American Farm Bureau Federation are listed below:

Regulatory Reform

AFBF: As president, what actions will you take to minimize the federal government’s regulatory burden on businesses such as farming and ranching? Will you support regulatory reform to ensure that federal regulations pass a cost-benefit test and make the process of writing new regulations more transparent?

Clinton campaign: “Hillary is committed to operating the U.S. government in as open and transparent a way as possible. She will continue and expand the open-government initiatives started by the current Administration and will direct federal agencies to increase the amount of information they voluntarily disclose online.

As president, she will always engage a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers and ranchers, to hear their concerns and ideas for how we can ensure our agriculture sector remains vibrant. If there are implementation challenges with a particular regulation, Hillary will work with all stakeholders to address them.”

Farm bill

AFBF: Federal farm programs and crop insurance provide an important safety net and risk management tool for farmers and ranchers, as well as consumers. Farm programs help keep America’s farmers growing, even after a “bad year,” so our consumers can continue to enjoy a plentiful, affordable food supply. It also provides food security for at-risk segments of the consumer population. Our nation is stronger when the alignment between farm and food assistance policies exists.

Farm programs cost less than 1 percent of our entire federal budget, while they keep our nation strong and non-reliant on other countries for our most basic need--food. Yet these long-standing, much reformed programs have been under fire by liberals and conservatives alike. As president, how will you stand with farm and ranch families and consumers to protect these important programs?

Clinton campaign: “Hillary knows the Farm Bill’s reauthorization presents an incredibly important opportunity to set both our agricultural and rural development policy priorities—which are central to our economy, energy, and food security.

That’s why she will work to ensure we provide a focused safety net for farmers and ranchers by continuing to make progress in targeting federal resources in commodity payment, crop insurance, and disaster assistance programs—which is all the more important with current commodity market prices. She will also support the next generation of farmers by doubling funding for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program and strengthening USDA grant programs to make them less about bureaucratic buckets and more about funding flexibility, leveraging local resources, and measuring results.

The Farm Bill also provides the opportunity to improve and enhance our rural development programs that are so pivotal to raising the standard of living in many rural communities—including programs to enhance broadband access, improve soil health and manage wastewater, and expand access to credit for small businesses.”

Immigration Reform and Ag Labor

AFBF: As president, what would you do to advance immigration reform and resolve the critical labor shortage that many farmers and ranchers face each year? How would you address the issue of undocumented workers who are already working on farms across America, as well as the need for a long-term supply of agricultural workers?

Clinton campaign: “Hillary knows that migrant farmworkers play a critical role in developing and supporting our agricultural economy. She has heard from farmers across the country who have expressed their frustrations about our broken immigration system.

That’s why as president, Hillary will introduce comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to full and equal citizenship within her first 100 days in office. It will treat every person with dignity, fix the family visa backlog, uphold the rule of law, protect our borders and national security, and bring millions of hardworking people into the formal economy. Hillary understands that the agricultural industry needs comprehensive immigration reform to protect both farm owners and the workers they employ, and ensure American families are able to put affordable, fresh food on their tables.”

International Trade/Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

AFBF: The United States has worked assertively over many different presidencies to set the example for fair and open trade, for resolving trade disputes using sound, science-based principles and standards and for gaining access to new markets. As president, will you be an aggressive proponent for expanding trade and be willing to pursue remedies against nations and their leaders who use various barriers to unfairly shield their markets from competition?

The TPP Agreement would boost U.S. agriculture exports and grow farmers’ and ranchers’ income by more than \$4 billion a year. That market growth and income boost is needed more than ever as our farmers face a downturn in commodity prices. Will you support ratification of the TPP Agreement to bring down foreign tariffs, address non-science-based barriers to trade and enable America’s farmers to sell more of their farm goods around the world?

Clinton campaign: “Hillary has a long record of standing up to countries like China. She fought against the Chinese when they tried to discriminate against New York companies, and she went toe-to-toe with them as Secretary of State. As president, Hillary will also crack down on foreign countries who cheat the rules by appointing a new trade prosecutor to keep other countries honest, and will use all of our tools to ensure other countries treat our products fairly, including our anti-dumping and countervailing duty laws, and pursuing taking cases at the WTO. Hillary has also established a plan to stop rewarding U.S. companies for moving jobs overseas.”

On TPP:

“For generations, America has been the breadbasket of the world. Hillary believes we can and must forge better trade deals for American workers, farmers, and other businesses. She believes any trade deal must create American jobs, raise wages, and improve our national security. Every new trade deal must meet that test. In fact, Hillary opposed the only multilateral trade deal she voted on in the Senate because it didn’t meet that standard. And as soon as the details of the final TPP deal were finalized – including what it contains on currency

manipulation and pharmaceuticals – she came out in opposition. It didn't meet her standard. The TPP also contains a weak “rules of origin” standard on automobiles that gives a backdoor into our markets to countries like China. Hillary has been clear and specific in her opposition to the TPP. She opposes it now, she opposes it in November, and she will not move it forward in January.”

Energy

AFBF: Agriculture is a growing provider of renewable energy—contributing to America’s energy independence and revitalizing rural economies. Will your support federal policies that encourage the production and use of farm-grown fuel stocks and renewable energy?

Clinton Campaign: “Rural America is a leader in energy production -- helping to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and make our economy more resilient. Renewable fuels can also play an important role in reducing carbon pollution. Rural innovators are finding new ways to produce low-carbon biofuels, using feedstocks ranging from algae to agricultural waste, with a wide range of transportation applications. And electricity generated from wind and solar energy can improve air quality, help achieve attainment of Clean Air Act standards, and lower taxpayers’ pollution control costs.

America’s farm communities are already playing a critical role in renewable energy production. For example, 99 percent of all wind production occurs in rural counties -- attracting more than \$100 billion in new investment and providing an important supplementary source of income to family farms. Meanwhile, [electricity prices have fallen](#) by 10 percent for American families and businesses [in real terms](#).

As president, Hillary will work to build on this progress, including by launching a \$60 billion Clean Energy Challenge to forge new federal partnerships with states, cities, and rural communities across the country, giving them the flexibility, tools and resources they need to cut emissions and expand clean energy. This includes expanding the Rural Utilities Service and other successful USDA energy programs and ensuring the federal government is a partner, not an obstacle, in getting low-cost wind and other renewable energy from rural communities to the rest of the country, and helping electric coops capture the clean energy and energy

efficiency opportunities of the 21st century. Hillary will also defend the Clean Power Plan, which the EPA estimates will deliver between \$55 and \$93 billion in annual economic and public health benefits by 2030, with [Americans’ electricity bills falling by between 7% and 8%](#).

Hillary will invest in advanced biofuels research and development, double loan guarantees made through the Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program, support the expansion of blender pumps and combat efforts by oil companies to limit consumer access to cleaner renewable fuels. She also is committed to getting the RFS back on track to effectively drive the development of cellulosic and other advanced biofuels.”

Food Safety

AFBF: Food quality and safety are vital concerns for consumers and farmers and ranchers.

Consumers are increasingly interested in where their food comes from, but their views are often influenced by misinformation and a lack of understanding of agriculture. How would you ensure that farmers and ranchers have the necessary freedom to operate while working to meet consumers' demands for a variety of food choices, whether organic or conventional, meat or vegetarian, local or the household-name products many of us grew up with and still enjoy thanks to our major national food makers? There is no one size fits all in agriculture. Would you ensure that regulations do not restrict consumers' or farmers' food and production choices?

Clinton Campaign: “Due to the ingenuity of America’s farmers and ranchers, consumers across the world have access to better, safer, and a wider variety of food options than ever before. Hillary Clinton believes that supporting that ingenuity goes hand in hand with ensuring food quality and safety.

That’s why, as president, Hillary will fight to increase our investment in the basic and applied research that makes agricultural advancements possible. She will also fight to ensure that America's farmers and ranchers of all sizes have the tools they need to succeed. That means expanding access to capital; investing in rural transportation, water, and broadband infrastructure; and continuing to make progress in targeting federal resources in commodity payment, crop insurance, and disaster assistance programs.

Hillary also believes we should work to build a strong local and regional food system by doubling funding for the Farmers Market Promotion Program and the Local Food Promotion Program. By expanding food hubs and farmers markets, increasing access to fresh food, and encouraging direct sales to local schools, hospitals, retailers and wholesalers, we can increase consumer access to food and support American farmers and ranchers.”

AFBF: There is no one size fits all in agriculture. Would you ensure that regulations do not restrict consumers' or farmers' food and production choices?

Clinton Campaign: As president, Hillary will always engage a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers and ranchers, to hear their concerns and ideas for how we can ensure our rural communities and our agriculture sector remain vibrant. If there are implementation challenges with a particular regulation, Hillary will work with all stakeholders to address them.

Endangered Species Act

AFBF: Privately owned land provides habitat for the majority of our nation’s endangered and threatened species. As a result landowners often face harsh regulatory restrictions on their ability to use the land or, worse, lawsuits or enforcement actions. Meanwhile, few species have actually been recovered under the law. It’s time to think about incentive-based programs that create a positive role for landowners in species recovery. The law is overdue for review and revamping. As president, how would you fix the broken Endangered Species Act, and what role would you assign America’s landowners?

Clinton Campaign: “Hillary knows that America’s ranchers and farmers are proud stewards of their lands, and that America’s wildlife depend on the health of working lands to survive and thrive. That is why she will increase both the availability and accessibility of funding to incentivize voluntary private conservation. For example, Hillary will work to fully fund the

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and will instruct her Secretary of Agriculture to establish a “one-stop shop” to help farmers and ranchers identify programs that can provide financial support for their conservation practices, including securing additional access for sportsmen, including hunters.

Hillary also believes that we should be doing more to slow and reverse the decline of at-risk wildlife species before reach the brink of extinction and need the protection Endangered Species Act. To this end, Hillary will propose nearly doubling the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program to \$100 million per year. This type of support for the voluntary conservation of at-risk wildlife can help reduce the need for species to receive the protections of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). For wildlife that are listed as threatened or endangered, Hillary will direct federal agencies to take full advantage of the flexible tools available under the ESA that respect and accommodate landowner interests, including safe harbor agreements, habitat conservation agreements, and other forms of voluntary conservation measures.”

Clean Water

AFBF: The Environmental Protection Agency has clear direction from both Congress and the Supreme Court on the limitations of its authority under the Clean Water Act, and yet the agency continues to push the limits or ignore them completely. What would you do as president to ensure that the EPA acts within the bounds of the Clean Water Act?

Clinton Campaign: “The Clean Water Act is one of our most successful environmental regulations, helping fulfill the basic right of all Americans to accessing clean water. Not too long ago our rivers were literally on fire, and polluters were free to dump toxic chemicals at will. The Clean Water Act not only stemmed these environmental disasters but helped to reverse course and restore healthy swimmable and fishable waters for all Americans to enjoy. As president, Hillary will continue this legacy. She will work to ensure waters are safe and protected, will maintain the longstanding exemptions for common farming practices, and will continue pushing for clarity within the law.”

Clean Air Act

AFBF: Greenhouse gas regulations that would raise farmers’ cost of production or impose a carbon tax would put American farmers and other businesses at a competitive disadvantage to farmers and businesses in other countries that would face fewer regulations while continuing to pollute the planet. How would you ensure that clean air and climate regulations are within the scope of federal agencies’ statutory authority and do not hamper American productivity and competitiveness?

Clinton Campaign: “Hillary Clinton rejects the false choice between strengthening our economy and protecting our environment and climate. This is particularly true in light of the historic Paris Climate Agreement reached last December, in which all countries committed to take national action to cut their carbon pollution. As President, Hillary will go beyond the agreement made in Paris, cutting our emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

As President, Hillary will work to make the United States the clean energy superpower of the 21st century, and build off the range of pollution and efficiency standards and clean energy tax

incentives that have made the United States a global leader in the battle against climate change while protecting kids' health, saving American households and businesses billions of dollars in energy costs, and creating thousands of good paying jobs.

Over the past seven years, the amount of wind power in the US has grown threefold and the amount of solar power has grown 30-fold. Renewable energy is now the fastest growing source of job creation in the country. America's farm communities have played a critical role in this progress with 99% of utility-scale wind production occurring in rural areas, attracting more than \$100 billion in private investment. Meanwhile, electricity prices have fallen by 10% for American families and businesses in real terms.

Landmark vehicle standards under the Clean Air Act are reducing US oil consumption by 1.8 billion barrels and saving the average driver \$130 to \$180 a year. The Renewable Fuel Standard is cutting US oil dependence and carbon pollution even more.

As President, Clinton will work to build on this progress, including by a launching \$60 billion Clean Energy Challenge to forge new federal partnerships with states, cities, and rural communities across the country that are ready to take the lead on clean energy and energy efficiency, giving them the flexibility, tools and resources they need to succeed. This includes expanding the Rural Utilities Service and other successful USDA energy programs and ensuring the federal government is a partner, not an obstacle, in getting low-cost wind and other renewable energy from rural communities to the rest of the country, and helping electric coops capture the clean energy and energy efficiency opportunities of the 21st century."

Biotechnology

AFBF: Our future food security will depend on science, technology and innovation to increase efficiency, adapt to droughts and fight plant diseases. Agricultural biotechnology and other new crop development techniques will prove vital. As president, how will you ensure that new traits are reviewed expeditiously, that USDA's GMO disclosure rules are focused on science and that solutions from science and technology are harnessed to meet the challenge of feeding a growing world?

Clinton Campaign: "Our goal should be to find policy solutions that are grounded in science and respect consumers. Hillary understands the need for a national solution to the GMO labeling question -- one that provides consistency to food companies and consumers across state lines. And she is glad Republicans and Democrats have worked together to build a bipartisan solution to this issue."

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