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the **LEADER**

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TRUST, TRADITION, AND RESPONSIBILITY

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“This past legislative session demonstrated the importance of making our voices heard at the legislature when farmers from across the state turned out to show their support for the Farm Act. As more legislative districts shift to urban legislators, it will be crucial that the farm community advocate for itself and build personal relationships with their elected officials so that the unique challenges we face in our rural areas are not overlooked or misconstrued.”

– NC Senator Brent Jackson

everyone comes together to support a policy – even though it may not help me personally – because we know it can help our neighbor down the road or even our fellow farmers across the state. That is what sets Farm Bureau apart from other organizations—our Farm Bureau family always comes together to support each other.” This tradition of farmers coming together every year to form a consensus is a big part of how Farm Bureau has maintained its reputation as a trusted voice for more than 80 years.

But while the trust we have earned is indeed a great asset, it is our shared responsibility to maintain that trust. It is imperative that we remain true to our process and that we continue to have engaged leaders who will guide this organization now and in the future. As you know, our state is constantly changing and fewer people know what it takes to farm in 2018. “Most elected officials have not tilled the ground and don’t know what we go through, but they make decisions. So it’s important for us to educate them,” said Yaklin. We understand that not everyone can leave the farm to attend Policy Review Day, meet with legislators, or attend a rally in support of fellow farmers. But we hope you will find a way to be involved, to share your concerns, and to help preserve the trust we have earned.



TRUST, TRADITION, AND RESPONSIBILITY: A LOOK AT OUR GRASSROOTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Trust is something that must be earned. This is true whether we’re talking about an individual, a business, an organization, or even a nation. It is earned by words, actions, and intentions that are consistent, reliable, and accurate. But trust is not something that survives on one action alone. Much like the crops you grow and the animals you raise, trust must be continually cared for and constantly maintained.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH POLICY DEVELOPMENT?

Trust in NC Farm Bureau’s policy development process is one of the primary reasons why legislators, media, other agriculture organizations and the public look to Farm Bureau as the Voice of Agriculture®. As Richmond County Farm Bureau President Chris Yaklin said in a recent interview, “Over the years, I do believe Farm Bureau has fostered a strong, trusted reputation as the Voice of Agriculture®, and I truly

believe the unique way we develop our policy gives us that credibility.”

“Unique” is a perfect way to describe our policy development process. While most policy across our nation starts from the top and trickles downward, Farm Bureau’s policy is established where it matters – at the grassroots level. We are a true grassroots organization. We have thousands of farmers from all over the state who actively participate in the policy development process to tell us what they need. Those farmers and the policies they enact guide the organization. These policies protect farmers and rural families and help ensure that our nation’s supply of food, fiber, and other commodities is safe and abundant, now and in the future.

Every year, this tradition of developing ideas into policy kicks off with Policy Review Day. These policies address a wide range of emerging issues and areas of concern to North Carolina farmers, including things like labor, healthcare, property

“North Carolina Farm Bureau policies reflect the needs and concerns of farmers across the state. Our policy development process strongly promotes input from farmers and that’s extremely valuable to our state and the future of agriculture...because when a farmer or someone who is engaged in agriculture can go to a Farm Bureau meeting, share a difficult circumstance or experience, and then it is eventually addressed or corrected by legislation or maybe just awareness – it’s a win for agriculture. That’s why the policy development process is important.”

– Jason Jones, Craven County Farm Bureau President

rights, taxes, regulatory reform, and more. It’s a day for NCFB’s farmer members to come together to talk about what’s going on at their farm, and to start figuring out how to solve tomorrow’s problems. “Policy might affect me differently than the way it affects someone in the mountains. So it’s important for us as farmers in different regions to come together and discuss these policies and come up with a consensus. And I see that in what we do with Policy Review Day and our whole policy procedure,” said Yaklin.

Craven County Farm Bureau President Jason Jones added, “Often times, we have different ideas on how to reach a solution. In the end, my experience is that