

Policy Advisory Group Report

Members

- Andy Bailey
- Bob Bischoff
- Brad Burbrink
- Tom Byers
- Jim Culp
- Justin Dale
- Alan Dunn
- Casey Evans
- Andy Fix
- Tom Gasper
- Kerry Goshert
- Guy Heitkemper
- Larry Huffmeyer
- Brad Lawrence
- Tom McKinney
- Quentin Overbeck
- Matt Schafer
- Mark Seib
- Jon Sparks
- Ed Yanos

Crops Policy Advisory Group

The Crops Policy Advisory Group met on June 22 to review and discuss a series of policies submitted by counties across the state that impact crop farmers. INFB staff also identified the issues listed below for PAG members to examine more closely and offer input with regard to INFB policy and positions. These discussions were accompanied by presentations by issue experts:

- Pollinators, including bee health and habitat improvement - Ray Brinkmeyer & Matt Rekeweg, Dow; Dave Shenefield, Indiana Beekeepers Association.
- State water resource monitoring and planning - Justin Schneider, INFB.
- Federal policy priorities - Kyle Cline, INFB.
 - GMO labeling and biotechnology
 - EPA regulation
 - Trade

As Cline noted during the recap of the November Crops PAG meeting, most of the aforementioned issues were included in that meeting's agenda as well. However, the focus of the November meeting was to identify/surface and research key areas for INFB policy improvement. The previous meeting also included a significant education component, while the June meeting was to focus on policy review and development in relation to those areas. Some of the policy areas addressed in November but not in the June meeting included:

- Farm bill implementation.
- Renewable Fuel Standard.
- Waters of the U.S.

Policy review discussion: The PAG spent a significant amount of time in the meeting reviewing and discussing various policy recommendations submitted by counties across the state. Below is a list of policy areas discussed and general outcomes or feedback:

- **Labeling and food safety regulations at farmer's markets:** The PAG requested additional information regarding food safety labels and regulations including variation across the state and whether a state standard for all food sold at markets would address challenges raised by members.
- **Local zoning of CAFOs:** The PAG agreed with policy recommendations of several counties to restrict counties or

local municipalities from passing and enforcing stricter regulations for CAFOs than state requirements. The committee also requested additional information about the definitions of CAFOs among state agencies and uniformity in code or lack thereof.

- **Energy and net metering:** The PAG discussed the increasing demand and use of renewable energy among farmers in the state. They also submitted a policy recommendation that would require all utilities and REMCs in the state to pay a minimum amount on excess electricity generated by renewable energy projects in net metering arrangements. In other energy discussions, the committee supported the use of E15 as a minimum blend within the RFS.
- **Water usage and rights:** The PAG discussed this issue in length. One of the issues discussed pertained to landowner rights to water; another dealt with the responsibility of owners when their irrigation projects significantly impact area water levels and/or drainage.
- **Infrastructure and road funding (AFBF):** The PAG agreed with a county policy recommendation from Hendricks County to restrict the use of road tax funds on trail projects or other non-road uses.
- **Farm policy/crop insurance:** The PAG agreed with three policy recommendations submitted by counties that crop insurance should cover a crop until its normal harvest time.

Questions regarding the Crops PAG can be directed to one of the group members or to [Kyle Cline](#), 317-692-7845, the Farm Bureau staff member facilitating the group.