

Alabama Cattlemen’s Association
2023-2024 Policy Book

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1. Agriculture and Food Policy (AFP)

AFP 1.1 Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI)

WHEREAS, the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries provides vital services to keep the beef cattle industry running efficiently.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA supports the Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries and sufficient funding for the department in order to maintain these vital services.

AFP 1.2 National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) Affiliation

WHEREAS, the ACA is a state affiliate of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, and

WHEREAS, ACA generally supports policy efforts of the NCBA understanding that a strong national/state partnership creates the strongest voice for the beef cattle industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA will work with NCBA on policy matters that are in the best interest of cattle producers in Alabama.

AFP 1.3 National Beef Checkoff

WHEREAS, the National Beef Checkoff consistently provides a positive return on investment to cattlemen by increasing beef demand through advertising, education, research and marketing of beef products, and

WHEREAS, this is achieved through a strong state and national partnership resulting in increased consumer demand for beef and higher consumer confidence.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports continuation of the National Beef Checkoff program and its implementation in Alabama utilizing the state's portion of the per head assessment.

AFP 1.4 State Beef Checkoff

WHEREAS, Alabama cattlemen support a state beef checkoff program that extends the efforts of the National Beef Checkoff program along with youth programs, cattle production research and producer programs to enhance the beef cattle industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the continuation of the Alabama State Beef Checkoff program.

AFP 1.5 Political Party Policy

WHEREAS, the mission of the association is to support elected officials who align with the values of the cattle industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA will support candidates in a non-partisan manner in order to effectively protect the well-being of the cattle industry in Alabama.

AFP 1.6 Alabama BEEF Political Action Committee (PAC)

WHEREAS, the Alabama BEEF Political Action Committee makes contributions, not endorsements, to state level political candidates that support the cattle industry, and

WHEREAS, the state AL BEEF PAC cannot support federal races.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA will work with the NCBA BEEF PAC to identify congressional candidates and members for contributions in federal races.

AFP 1.7 Rural Broadband

WHEREAS, Alabama farm families are increasingly conducting business on the internet, and

WHEREAS, internet in some rural areas in the state is unfounded or unreliable.

WHEREAS, improving infrastructure for rural broadband can involve property damage or destruction.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports immediate expansion of rural broadband access across the state without invading private property rights of landowners.

AFP 1.8 Cattle on the Highway Liability

BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the current liability law (Ala. Code § 3-5-3) that the owner of any stock or animal shall not be liable for any damages to any motor vehicle or any occupant thereof suffered, caused by or resulting from a collision with such stock or other animal, unless it be proven that such owner knowingly or willfully put or placed such stock upon such public highway, road or street where such damages were occasioned.

AFP 1.9 Cow Calf Risk Management Programs

WHEREAS, agricultural economists have concluded that cow-calf producers generally do not have readily available options for price protection and risk mitigation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the development of risk management agency programs for cow-calf producers to help mitigate losses due to market volatility.

AFP 1.10 Right to work

WHEREAS, Alabama is a right to work state.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes any efforts to extend federal authorization of compulsory unionism to agricultural employees or employees not covered by such a provision.

AFP 1.11 Law Enforcement and Crime

WHEREAS, farms and rural areas are subject to unique crime related to livestock and equipment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA supports funding and maintaining a dedicated investigation unit that can lead or assist local law enforcement in a timely manner to rural crime related, but not limited to livestock welfare, livestock theft, equipment theft and domesticated animal nuisances.

AFP 1.12 Definition of Meat

WHEREAS, substantial monetary investments have been made in the development of artificial/alternative meat and inaccurately labeling beef or using similar nomenclature, and

WHEREAS, alternative proteins aim to use beef on the label to falsely lead the consumer to purchase.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA will support and pursue regulatory and legislative mechanisms to protect the definition of meat to only include animal protein derived from livestock production as defined in Ala. Code § 3-5-1.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA opposes allowing other food products not derived from cattle production to use nomenclature associated with beef industry.

AFP 1.13 Price Discovery

WHEREAS, increased marketing of fed cattle on a formula basis has led to a decrease in negotiated trade and reduced price discovery in the cattle industry; and

WHEREAS, lack of price discovery is very detrimental to all cattle market participants, especially cow-calf producers who have the potential to be the most negatively impacted; and

WHEREAS, value-based marketing has paid dividends to the cattle industry in the form of efficiency and increased product demand; and

WHEREAS, requiring packers to buy a specific percentage of cattle through negotiated trade without respect for differing geographical regions could dramatically disrupt the current marketing process and have costly impacts to the cattle industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports: industry led, regulatory and legislative solutions to achieve robust price discovery that are equitable for all sectors of the cattle industry.

AFP 1.14 Right to Farm

WHEREAS, agriculture has the largest economic impact of any industry in the state, and

WHEREAS, protection of this vital sector allows farmers the ability to farm and produce food for the world, and

WHEREAS, Alabama has a robust right to farm law (Ala. Code § 6-5-127)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the current Right to Farm law and will work to continue protecting the rights of cattlemen.

2. Cattle Health and Well Being (CHW)

CHW 2.1 Animal Welfare

WHEREAS, Alabama cattlemen have always been concerned with the proper care and welfare of cattle, recognizing that good animal husbandry practices are essential to efficient and profitable production, and

WHEREAS, animal rights groups aim to eliminate animal agriculture.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes animal rights legislation and will continue to defend cattle producers' ability to operate without hindrance from these groups.

CHW 2.2 Surveillance and Control of Livestock Diseases

WHEREAS, controlling cattle disease is of utmost importance to the speed of commerce and continued access of beef from Alabama cattle to domestic and foreign markets.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA supports sufficient funding for the State Veterinarian and Department of Agriculture and Industries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA supports sufficient funding for the United States Department of Agriculture to control animal disease.

CHW 2.3 Animal Disease Traceability

WHEREAS, the Animal Disease Traceability ensures the industry and government officials the ability to identify, isolate and effectively manage animal disease.

WHEREAS, efficiency in this system will evolve as new technology comes into the market.

WHEREAS, it is of utmost importance that new technology costs are not all borne by cow-calf producers and implementation does not slow the speed of commerce.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the current ADT law and will continue to actively engage in the topic as changes are made in technology.

CHW 2.4 Trichomoniasis

WHEREAS, Trichomoniasis can be an economically devastating disease for cattlemen.

WHEREAS, Trichomoniasis management should be an initiative for the association.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA will support the Alabama State Veterinarian's efforts to control and mitigate Trichomoniasis and encourages uniformity of state laws for the disease.

CHW 2.5 Drug Regulations

WHEREAS, animal health and welfare are top priorities for cattlemen, and

WHEREAS, Veterinary Feed Directives and guidance establish new regulations that will be imposed on feed distributors, veterinarians and cattlemen, and

WHEREAS, these rules could inhibit a cattleman's ability to provide timely treatment to their animals, prove costly and burden already strained large animal veterinarians.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA will work with the appropriate entities, organizations and government officials to ensure that cattlemen have reasonable access to products that help ensure animal health and well-being, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA insists all cattle related regulations be based on science and not cost prohibitive.

CHW 2.6 Beef Quality Assurance

WHEREAS, beef producers across all segments of the industry contribute to the production of high-quality beef for consumers.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the implementation and expansion of Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) to all cattlemen in Alabama to continue improving the quality of beef offered to consumers.

CHW 2.7 Livestock Hauling

WHEREAS, hauling livestock requires unique needs and challenges to ensure safe and timely delivery of live animals, and

WHEREAS, livestock haulers have consistently shown safe driving records according to research studies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports consistent truck weights for livestock haulers in order to ensure accurate load regulations with neighboring states so long as livestock and public safety is ensured.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA supports permanently increasing Hours of Service (HOS) for livestock haulers in order to avoid safety and biosecurity concerns for livestock.

CHW 2.8 Alternative Feedstuffs

WHEREAS, utilizing alternative feedstuffs and coproducts is beneficial for cattle and the environment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports the utilization of alternative feedstuffs that are scientifically proven for beef cattle nutrition.

3. International Trade (IT)

IT 3.1 Beef Exports

WHEREAS, international trade is vitally important to the future profitability of all segments of the cattle industry, and

WHEREAS, ACA believes that supply and demand economics should be maintained, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA supports fair and equitable foreign trade agreements.

IT 3.2 Beef Imports

WHEREAS, the U.S. Meat Import Act of 1979 (PL96-177) allows meat importation under specific regulations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA supports the policy of NCBA on meat import inspection and encourages monitoring USDA's administration and enforcement to ensure it safeguards the U.S. cattle industry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA does not support importing beef from countries with known animal disease issues.

IT 3.3 Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports country of origin labeling that is voluntary and industry driven.

4. Property Rights and Environment (PRE)

PRE 4.1 Private Property Development

WHEREAS, private land ownership and private property rights is of utmost importance to the association.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA opposes any efforts to develop a land use plan for areas of the state that impedes necessary agriculture practices.

PRE 4.2 Private Property Rights

WHEREAS, private property rights are of utmost importance to the association.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes legislation impeding a land owners rights to utilize the land for its intended use.

PRE 4.3 State and Federal Land Acquisitions

WHEREAS, private land ownership and private property rights are of utmost importance to the association, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes any state or federal land acquisition and will work to repeal laws that allow blanket permission for federal acquisitions.

PRE 4.4 Application of Soil Amendments

WHEREAS, soil amendments are advantageous to landowners, and

WHEREAS, landowners utilize nutrient management plans to make decisions about soil amendment use.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes any legislation seeking to restrict a landowner's ability to improve pastureland within established best management practices.

PRE 4.5 Riparian Rights

WHEREAS, legislation related to water rights can be very restrictive to private land owners.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes any federal or state efforts that threaten a landowner's ability to raise livestock in the state.

PRE 4.6 Local County Restrictive Ordinances

WHEREAS, counties increasingly attempt to regulate the livestock industry, and

WHEREAS, this is done by promulgating rules, regulations or ordinances on agriculture more stringent than state laws that are based on science, and

WHEREAS, all livestock regulations should be based on sound science and research.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes all local regulations on the livestock industry.

PRE 4.7 Endangered Species Act (ESA)

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Endangered Species Act has far reaching implications concerning agricultural practices in areas where endangered species exist, and

WHEREAS, predators including, but not limited to, coyotes and black vultures have major economic impacts on Alabama cattle farms each year, and

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act is burdensome to private property owners.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports economic compensation for landowners burdened by the ESA and does not support overburdensome regulation by ESA on landowners.

PRE 4.8 Liability and Trespassing

WHEREAS, occurrences of trespassing on private property are a concern for cattlemen.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ACA supports laws protecting a landowner's rights regarding trespassing.

PRE 4.9 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

WHEREAS, drones offer many benefits to cattlemen.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports allowing the use of drones in cattle production, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA supports protocols ensuring privacy and boundaries for such technology.

PRE 4.10 Waters of the United States (WOTUS)

WHEREAS, the Clean Water Act has created burdensome and overreaching regulations for cattlemen.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA will work to prevent expansion of federal jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA supports future WOTUS rules to be science based and nonburdensome for landowners.

PRE 4.11 Foreign Land Ownership

WHEREAS, national food security is of utmost importance to cattle producers in the United States,

WHEREAS, there is concern over foreign entities purchasing agricultural land in Alabama,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports limits to agricultural land purchased by foreign entities in the state.

PRE 4.12 Solar Energy

WHEREAS, energy independence can be achieved through multiple outlets,

WHEREAS, solar panel investment is taking place on large tracts of agricultural land,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports self-sustaining solar energy infrastructure without government subsidy while also respecting the rights of private land ownership.

5. Tax and Credit (TC)

TC 5.1 Property Taxes

WHEREAS, cattlemen in Alabama graze cattle on more than 2 million acres of land in the state, and

WHEREAS, input costs largely affect a cattleman's bottom line.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes any effort to increase property taxes and/or assessment rates, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ACA supports mechanisms that will lower the burden of property taxes on agricultural property.

TC 5.2 Agriculture Exemption

BE IT RESOLVED, ACA supports efforts to provide exemption for all agricultural and veterinary supplies from the state sales tax when used in the care of large animals.

TC 5.3 Estate Tax

WHEREAS, federal estate and gift taxes are a major burden on family farms and small businesses.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ACA opposes any effort to increase estate taxes, including capital gains at death.