

TGANC 2017 Resolutions

Approved at Annual Meeting, February 3, 2017

We believe tobacco production to be essential to the economy and well-being of the people of North Carolina. We further recognize that tobacco plays a vital role in the economy of the United States. In the interest of preserving that contribution, we offer the following resolutions:

By Category and new or modified are indicated by BOLD type.

Production and Marketing

1. **We call upon the industry to treat every farmer with dignity and respect regardless of the size and scope of their operation or its geographical location.**
2. We call upon tobacco companies that contract with growers to continue to develop policies and practices that are fair and inclusive of all growers with regards to the economic welfare of tobacco producers as a whole.
3. We oppose multi-tier contract conditions and markets that do not publish a retail price for tobacco that reflects its market value.
4. We request that NCDA continue working to devise a method to forecast intended planting and actual planted acres of tobacco for each current crop year.
5. We support the Plant Industry Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture in maintaining its "Apparent Freedom" status of enforcing those regulations relative to requiring zero (0) tolerance of any pest on any agricultural, horticultural, floral, or nursery plants imported to North Carolina.
6. We support tobacco growers and purchasers to collectively develop strategies, systems, and procedures that will enhance the integrity and quality of flue-cured and burley tobacco and reduce the cost of marketing.
7. Observing the increasing markets for liquid nicotine we support having U.S. grown tobacco as the source for such materials.
8. Any transgenic tobacco for commercial production should not be planted in such a way that it creates a risk for cross-contamination with conventional.
9. We presently oppose the commercialization of tobacco cultivars for traditional uses whose genetic makeup has been modified with non-tobacco genes. We feel that such cultivars should be limited to controlled experimental situations and restricted from entering the commercial trade until such tobacco has been accepted in general commercial usage.

Labor and Workforce:

10. Recognizing that North Carolina is a "right-to-work" state, we oppose any regulations or sanctions that would cite labor union membership as an absolute requirement for any agricultural laborer, regardless of that worker's citizenship status.
11. We understand and support workers' rights and regard the employees of the family farm as critical to the operations success.
12. We implore all commodity groups and the tobacco leadership groups and governmental entities to come together with commitment and support to resolve the farm worker labor concerns that impact the livelihood of the farm families in North Carolina, including comprehensive immigration reform.
13. We encourage all farmers to understand and adhere to the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act in regards to lawful employment of any person working on a farm.
14. **We remain opposed to the employment of persons (with exceptions for members of the farm family), under the age of 16 working in tobacco production in the United States and abroad. We further call upon the industry to hold the world markets to the same standards.**
15. **We support and call upon the USDOL to review the protocols used to determine the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) and the need for a wage formula correction more in line with prevailing wages.**

Trade and Export:

16. We oppose detrimental federal intervention, lawsuits and other unwarranted attacks on a legal industry. We recognize that tobacco is a legal commodity representing an extremely large amount of international trade; therefore we insist that all agencies and individuals representing the United States in any area of trade be allowed to promote the high quality, comparative value of U.S. tobacco, including fair treatment in all trade agreements.
17. **We oppose any efforts to unfairly target, designated differently, or omit tobacco, a legal commodity from future trade agreement negotiations.**
18. We are categorically opposed to any trade agreement present in force or being considered in the future that does not include any and all legally grown U.S. agricultural commodities.
19. **We support a full review of the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) formula and any implementation of corrective measures to make it effective with the global market and import/export trade circumstances that will benefit U.S farmers.**

Policy and Regulatory:

20. We request that the USDA-FSA and USDA-NRCS be more sensitive to the need for a more common sense approach to the enforcement of rules as stated in the Foods Securities Act of 1985, i.e. Sodbuster, Wetlands, and Conservation Compliance. We further request that said rules be interpreted uniformly on a county-by-county basis and that penalties be applied on each individual tract basis.
21. We request that the Environmental Protection Agency and the FDA refrain from acting in a discriminatory manner with respect to the approval for labeling of pesticides for use on tobacco.
22. **We maintain that all lending practices of the Agricultural Credit Division of the Farm Service Agency be fair, equitable, and timely to all applicants.**
23. We support individual property rights for all agricultural enterprises, provided they meet all County, State, and Federal regulations.
24. We oppose any future increase in the state or federal excise tax on tobacco products.
25. We further recommend that our Association and other tobacco supportive organizations continue to publicize the economic benefits of tobacco to our nation's policy makers in terms of jobs and tax revenue.
26. We are opposed to additional legislation and regulation that would restrict when and where adults choose to smoke. We implore all tobacco interest and tobacco communities to come together with commitment and support to solve the issues and problems that threaten the economic contributions of tobacco to our state, our nation and our growers.
27. We are opposed to the use of any tax dollars being allocated to any agency whose agenda is aimed toward the detriment of the tobacco industry.
28. We strongly urge the NC Legislature to restore full funding to the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission for future years.

Extension and Research:

29. **We applaud and support the continued efforts of North Carolina State University, Extension Research Service for managing and directing an appropriate research program that enhances the profitability of growing and marketing tobacco.**
30. **We support the completion and full funding of the W.K. Collins Agronomy Endowment to provide for at least two permanent tobacco specific positions at NC State University.**
31. We applaud the Tobacco Industry and related agribusiness for cooperating in the development of research programs and providing financial support for tobacco research.
32. We request that the North Carolina General Assembly provide the necessary funding support for the N.C. Department of Agriculture to serve the citizens of our state.
33. We request the North Carolina General Assembly recognize the economic value of budgeting research funds for tobacco and stipulate that funding provided for the Academic, Extension and Research Budgets of the College of Agriculture at NC State University be used for such designated purposes.

34. We are concerned that essentially no new funds are allocated by the Agricultural Research Service of USDA for tobacco research. We believe this is discriminatory to tobacco farmers and specifically request that additional funds be allocated for regional research on tobacco based upon the enormous tax contribution this industry makes to our governmental budgets. This is especially true as we continue to await FDA regulatory authority.
35. **We applaud the GoldenLeaf Foundation for its generous support to guarantee the Plant Sciences Initiative (PSI) will advance to completion.**
36. **We support the mission of the Land Grant University and call upon the administration at NC State University to conduct full review of admission policies that may place student applicants from farming and rural areas at a competitive disadvantage when pursuing degrees in agriculture and agribusiness.**

Economics and Finance:

37. TGANC recognizes the importance of sound and prudent credit policy. We encourage banks, agricultural credit associations and any other public, private and governmental entities that provide credit to farmers and agribusinesses to be cognizant of changes that occur within the agricultural community. We encourage such institutions to continue to find ways to provide both long and short-term credit.
38. We encourage the Golden Leaf Foundation, which was formed to distribute 50% of North Carolina's MSA proceeds to tobacco dependent Communities, to recognize that the most effective means of revitalizing these communities is to employ the infrastructure that already exists, and is based on a tobacco farming economy.
39. TGANC encourages USDA in their statistical surveys to release by December 1st of each year estimates to the public on tobacco acreage produced in each state for that year.
40. Recognizing the scope and importance of the state's # 1 industry - agriculture, and specifically farm land for agricultural production, we request all governmental regulatory agencies maintain an understanding and policy supporting the critical need and rights of water usage, particularly those sources traditionally used and developed for agricultural practices.
41. We support efforts to help create awareness about the consequences associated with loss of productive farmland. We applaud the NC Department of Agriculture and the NC General Assembly for its creation and funding of the Farm Land Preservation Trust in the mitigation of the disappearance of our farm land and natural resources.
42. TGANC continues to be concerned about the potential for sharp escalation in costs of production in growing tobacco and the importance of those entities that purchase leaf tobacco to understand such expenses.
43. Aging infrastructure is a major concern of all involved in tobacco production. TGANC requests that purchasers of tobacco be aware that multiyear contracts and pricing sufficient to ensure long term profitability are necessary to inspire enough confidence in the grower base to allow for modernizing tobacco specific investments

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

44. **We oppose increasing compliance costs associated with GAP certification programs.**
45. **We call on the industry to hold all growers around the world to the same GAP standards.**
46. Given the unnecessary costs of multiple barn testing requirements, TGANC advocates that a single, standardize barn test program continues.
47. Understanding that GAP training is beneficial to the industry and that all growers are now required to comply, we support a continued standardized GAP training program.
48. **GAP assessment visits should be conducted in a more streamlined approach with better consistency. We further request that attention should be given towards more careful handling of certain sensitive data and information while conducting assessments.**
49. **We call upon GAP Connections to provide a detailed outline of what farmers should expect in advance of an assessment visit/review.**
50. **We call upon the industry to adopt a single and standard GAP on-farm assessment and avoid duplicate visits to the same locations during the same crop year.**
51. We encourage the industry to explore opportunities to achieve increased yields for conventional tobacco seed.

- 52. We call upon the tobacco industry to maintain awareness of the importance of social responsibility.**
53. While US tobacco producers pride themselves on the integrity of what is known to be the most carefully produced, high quality tobacco in the world, we acknowledge that possible findings of any noxious materials from naturally occurring plants also present in the fields should be thoroughly investigated and require a cooperative effort to find solutions that resolves such concerns to the satisfaction of our customers.

Crop Insurance:

54. We request that tobacco be treated equally by RMA relative to all other fully covered and insurable crops.
- 55. We recommend that flue-cured tobacco producers need to furnish a valid contract affiliated with recognized purchasers in order to obtain full value multi peril crop insurance coverage, and that tobacco planted absent a valid contract only be insurable at a reduced rate in order to help discourage total over production.**
- 56. We support review and revisions for final dates of insurance coverage that more accurately reflects the modifications to the current growing season lasting longer. In particular, wind coverage should extend beyond October 1st for wind and hail policies.**
- 57. We recommend that TAGS be reviewed by RMA and changes implemented that require non value tobacco to be destroyed.**
- 58. In situations of wide spread weather events and natural disasters, we call upon RMA and agencies to pay claims in a timelier manner.**
59. We request that all states be treated equally by the Risk Management Agency in reference to the MPC I regulations and that production and price guarantees adequately reflect the true costs of production. The premium charges should be based on the same standards as all other commodities.