

IOWA FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

# SOUND OFF!

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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1957



## What IS FARM BUREAU?



Farm Bureau is a free, independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization of farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement, thereby promoting the national welfare. Farm Bureau is local, national and international in its scope and influence; and is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. (AFBF Resolutions Dec. 1956)



*Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families in all types of agriculture financed and controlled by members.*

FARM BUREAU IS NOT "THEY"  
NOR "IT" NOR DES MOINES  
NOR CHICAGO

Farm Bureau is You!



YES — Farm Bureau is . . .



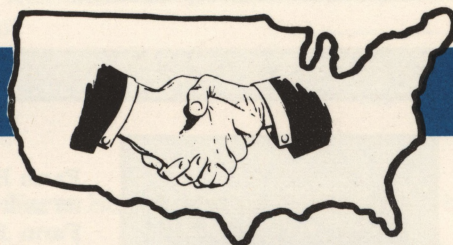
EACH MEMBER  
IN EACH COUNTY

Joined  
together  
in the



IOWA FARM BUREAU  
FEDERATION

Joined together  
with members  
in 48 states and  
Puerto Rico in the



AMERICAN FARM  
BUREAU  
FEDERATION

ALL JOINED  
TOGETHER

IN A NATION-WIDE ORGANIZATION  
FOR AGRICULTURE!

# Some Basic Concepts

## OF FARM BUREAU ORGANIZATION

1

**FARM BUREAU IS A  
FARMERS' ORGANIZATION**

This distinguishes it from industrial, labor, veterans and other types of organizations. Farm Bureau is financed by farmers, run by farmers, to do for farmers what farmers want done.

2

**FARM BUREAU IS A GENERAL FARM  
ORGANIZATION THAT IS NATION-  
WIDE IN SCOPE**

Farm Bureau reconciles the differences between the producers of nearly 300 different farm commodities throughout the country. To perform this function requires effective state organizations in all 48 states. Farm Bureau is the only organization that meets this qualification.

3

**FARM BUREAU DEVELOPS A CONSTRUCTIVE  
PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PREVENT OR SOLVE  
PROBLEMS**

*Farm Bureau is not a protest movement, it has a broad positive program of legislation, public relations, education and service-for-members.*

4

**FARM BUREAU USES A FAMILY  
MEMBERSHIP APPROACH**

Farmers' problems are of interest to all members of the family. Farming business is unique in that it lends itself so completely to the family unit approach. Farm Bureau reflects this same basic viewpoint.

5

**FARM BUREAU HAS A COMPLETELY  
DECENTRALIZED STRUCTURE OF  
ORGANIZATION**

Each unit of Farm Bureau — county, state, national — has local control. Farm Bureau's strength is based upon the various units wanting to cooperate rather than having to. Organization discipline is self-discipline, not imposed by higher organization authority.

6

**FARM BUREAU POLICIES ARE  
DEVELOPED ON A NON-  
PARTISAN BASIS AND SUP-  
PORT FOR THEM IS SOUGHT  
ON A BI-PARTISAN BASIS**

*Farm Bureau avoids partisanship in the determination of what farmers are going to be for and then works with people in both political parties to put into action the policies developed by the membership.*

**Read These  
10 CONCEPTS**

*Before  
Group  
Discussion*

7

**FARM BUREAU BELIEVES IN  
AND PRACTICES THE PRIN-  
CIPLES OF DEMOCRACY**

Farm Bureau believes in the freedom of the individual and the right of citizens to select their leaders—those who will represent them. Farm Bureau practices democracy within the organization. Its leaders are elected by the members and then are given member-decided policies to carry out.

8

**FARM BUREAU HAS A PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT**

*See page four of this bulletin*

9

**FARM BUREAU HAS A  
MORAL PHILOSOPHY**

Farm Bureau is not a religious movement, but faith in God is one of the elements of its moral make-up. Farm Bureau places God at the pinnacle of home and country. Farm Bureau believes in freedom of worship and in the dignity and worth of the individual.

10

**FARM BUREAU IS AN  
EDUCATIONAL  
ORGANIZATION**

*Farm Bureau has as one of its original reasons for being in existence the promotion of information and education for rural people. The organization's program is one of assisting in the creating of understanding about the forces affecting agriculture, the problems requiring a solution and the various solutions being offered.*

# DISCUSSIONNAIRE

1 What is a farm organization? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What is a governmental agency? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you think they differ? \_\_\_\_\_

2 Who should belong to Farm Bureau?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3 Would a general farm organization approach the solution of problems in a different way than a commodity organization?

YES ☐ NO ☐ WHY \_\_\_\_\_

4 Who "runs" your County Farm Bureau?  
 How did they receive their job? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5 How do you help to elect the members of the Board of Directors of your IFBF? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6 Do you attend your County Annual Meeting? YES ☐ NO ☐

Have you ever attended the State Convention of your Farm Bureau? YES ☐ NO ☐

What is the program of activity at the State Convention? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7 Do you believe it would be to the best interests of farmers if your organization endorsed candidates for public office?

YES ☐ WHY \_\_\_\_\_

NO ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

8 Do you belong to any other organization as democratic as Farm Bureau? Any other organization that both (1) elects the leadership democratically and (2) asks the members to make policies for guidance to the leadership?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If "yes", list \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9 The democracy in Farm Bureau takes time because of the tremendous number of members participating. Would it be better to let the elected leaders form the policy of the organization so it could move faster?

NO ☐ WHY \_\_\_\_\_

YES ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

10 Do you complete a policy development opinionnaire each fall? YES ☐ NO ☐

How many members in your county did so? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you satisfied with this number? YES ☐ NO ☐

11 Which do you think is more effective? (a) Farm Bureau public relations carried out by employees; (b) Each and every farmer informed and working at the job of good public relations?

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

12 What should Farm Bureau members be willing to do?

Learn basic principles ☐, study our problems ☐, propose sound solutions ☐, agree on best programs ☐, act together ☐, do nothing ☐, leave the decisions to employees ☐.

13 What is Farm Bureau's most important job? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# FARM BUREAU PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT

Our Constitution was purposely designed to secure liberty by a division of authority among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of our government, and by diffusing governmental power among the states and the people.

Our unparalleled progress is founded on freedom, initiative, and individual opportunity. These concepts have allowed the development of an economic system which has provided unprecedented goods and services and supported widespread educational and religious opportunity. It is our constant challenge to work vigorously to maintain them and to build a better America on this firm foundation.

We, as Farm Bureau members, believe:

*In our constitutional form of government and its division of powers.*

In freedom of speech, press, and peaceful assembly.

In separation of church and state and the right of each individual to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

That acceptance of citizenship responsibility by individuals is necessary to the preservation of self government.

*In the American competitive system, in which property is privately owned, privately managed, and operated for profit, and in which supply and demand are the primary determinants of market price.*

That efficiency of production and maximum per capita production are primary elements in determining standards of living.

That property rights are essential to the preservation of personal freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution.

*In the right of every man to choose his own occupation; to be rewarded in accordance with his productive contribution to society; and to save, invest, and spend his earnings as he chooses.*

That the further centralization of power and authority in the federal government and the apathy of the American people to this trend are among the greatest dangers threatening our Republic and the American way of life.

That the trend toward increased centralization of power in the federal government, if left unchecked, will lead to socialism and thus to communism.

That such "planned economy" concepts as socialism and communism, fascism, and other forms of totalitarianism should be opposed wherever and in whatever form they may be found.

*That their personal beliefs with respect to private capitalism, socialism, and communism be stated by candidates for public office and employees of governments at all levels.*

That, in his quest for "security," the individual must oppose policies leading to the curtailment of individual freedom and opportunity.

That monopoly in any form whether by government, industry, labor, or agriculture jeopardizes freedom and self-government.

In government by law, impartially administered, without special privilege.

*That government propagandizing of the electorate threatens the maintenance of self-government.*

That establishment by the government of organizations of citizens which may in any way remain under its political influence or control threatens the continuation of self government.

*That secrecy in governmental affairs should not be tolerated except as actually essential to national security.*

In strong and responsible state and local units of government and in protection of state laws against federal preemption.

That farm people have the right and the responsibility to speak for themselves through organizations of their choice without government coercion or intervention.

*A.F.B.F. Resolutions—December, 1956.*

## DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Political parties can speak for agriculture.
2. A combination of labor leaders, politicians, public relations men and promoters can best speak for farmers.
3. Organizations that represent, or are financed by, or are organized by, or are otherwise tied in with state or federal governments are best able to speak for farmers.
4. Farmers should belong to an organization that permits growers of all commodities from all states to come together to study their problems and work for sound answers.
5. Farmers are affected by what laboring men in the city do, how much work they do and the wages they get.
6. Farmers who grow any kind of commodity are affected by what farmers in other countries and states grow and how much.
7. Farmers gain most when they pay no attention to the public interest.
8. Farmers are affected by what business and industry do or don't do.

AGREE      DISAGREE      WHY?


**DON'T FORGET TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS BASED UPON YOUR DISCUSSION OF THIS SOUND-OFF AND MAIL THEM TO YOUR COUNTY FARM BUREAU OFFICE**