

OFF THE CUFF

BY: Ron Kern

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With the presidential election just a couple of weeks away I thought those involved in agriculture may want to see the candidates responses on several issues. These were gleaned through a candidate questionnaire compiled by the American Farm Bureau.

As president, how would you be a proponent for enhancing farm policy programs to bring certainty to farm and ranch families through crop insurance, improved risk management programs and support for beginning farmers and ranchers, while also bringing much-needed funding to agricultural research?

Kamala Harris

I will fight to defend programs that allow farmers and ranchers to prosper, while Trump and his allies are trying to defund those programs. Vice President Harris and Governor Walz know how important crop insurance is to protect farmers from unforeseen changes in circumstances. As a Congressman, Governor Walz expanded veterans' access to crop insurance, farm education, and job training, and led legislation to improve veterans' access to mental health care. Trump, on the other hand, consistently proposed deep cuts to programs like these that are essential to farmers and ranchers—including coverage for changes in crop yields and price, as well as rural job training and workforce development—all to pay for his tax handouts to the wealthiest Americans. If he's elected, his Project 2025 agenda will give more handouts to the super-wealthy, while making crop insurance and other necessities for family farmers even more expensive.

Donald Trump

The American Farmer is essential to our economy and our way of life. We rely on our farmers, ranchers, and growers to ensure the safety and security of our food supply. As president, I signed a massive Farm Bill that improved agriculture programs and increased the amount of money that farmers can borrow. We will permanently end our reliance on China for all critical goods and strengthen domestic Buy American and Hire American policies.

As President I will support access and affordability to the risk management tools that were a part of the 2018 Farm Bill I signed into law. Improvements must be made to Reference Prices, Crop Insurance, Dairy Margin Coverage and more Specialty Crop Insurance. American agriculture is built on science, technology and innovation and we must stay ahead of China with our science investments.

As president, how would you be a proponent for expanding trade and pursuing remedies against nations and their leaders who use various barriers to unfairly shield their markets from competition?

Kamala Harris

As Vice President, Kamala Harris has stood up to China's unfair economic practices to protect Americans, including farmers and ranchers. As President, she will not tolerate unfair trade practices from China or any competitor that undermines American farmers and ranchers.

Donald Trump

As president, I took historic action to pry open foreign markets and knocked down unjust barriers to American goods. I successfully negotiated and renegotiated more than 50 trade agreements to boost farm exports by billions of dollars, supporting millions of American jobs and our incredible Farmers. I ended the disaster known as NAFTA and replaced it with the USMCA. These gaping wounds were costing our country countless jobs and trillions of dollars in wealth. I would also note that under Biden-Harris policies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is projecting a record agricultural trade deficit of \$32 billion for federal fiscal year 2024 (Oct. 2023 to September 2024). Given that our farmers are the best and most competitive in the world, this deficit plainly results from unfair trading practices abroad. I will fight those barriers with every tool at my disposal, and I will make sure that other countries understand the consequences of blocking our farm products. As part of my effort to knock down barriers to American Farm products, I will work to pass the Trump Reciprocal Trade Act and will prioritize American producers over foreign outsourcers.

When China targeted our farmers, I sent \$28 billion relief payments to protect our farmers from Chinese abuses. I will always side with Farmers in America.

As president, what provisions would you support to help farmers and ranchers remain on the land and producing food, fuel and fiber?

Kamala Harris

I have made clear that, under their plan, no American making less than \$400,000 a year will pay more in taxes, and that includes most farmers and ranchers. They will also fight to make sure the ultra-wealthy pay their fair share in taxes. Meanwhile, Donald Trump's \$1.3 trillion giveaway to big corporations allowed them to consolidate power, move more jobs and production overseas, and undercut local small business growth, including in rural communities. Under Trump's agenda, farms and ranches were told the only path to success was to get big or get out. As President, Kamala Harris will fight for a tax code that is more fair for everyone—including America's hardworking farmers and ranchers—and doesn't just benefit the most wealthy among us.

Donald Trump

I will take immediate steps to defeat inflation, increase real farm incomes, and grow the agricultural economy by unleashing American energy, slashing wasteful government spending, and cutting burdensome regulation. To protect the pro-farmer tax cuts I delivered in 2017, including the elimination of the estate tax, or death tax, as well as the giant tax cut I gave to family farms that operate as pass-through entities, which produce more than 90 percent of agricultural products in the United States, I will also make permanent the provisions of the Trump Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and pursue additional tax cuts.

As president, would you support a strategy that encourages the domestic production and use of all available forms of energy?

Kamala Harris

I am committed to a future defined by both American energy security and independence, as well as a clean energy economy that creates good-paying jobs, fueled by the investments we are making here at home. Vice President Harris cast the deciding vote to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, which provided nearly \$10 billion for rural renewable energy infrastructure—and made the largest investment in rural electrification in nearly 90 years. This historic legislation also included more than \$2 billion in investments for the Rural Energy for America program, which provides loans and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to build renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. The Inflation Reduction Act is also increasing domestic biofuels, boosting high-quality job opportunities across rural America and enlisting agriculture as a pivotal tool to fight climate change.

Donald Trump

Yes, a Trump Administration will increase domestic energy production across the board, streamline permitting, and end market-distorting restrictions on Oil, Natural Gas, and Coal. I will lower energy prices even below the record lows achieved during my first term. No president has ever fought harder for our farmers than I did. I issued a rule declaring that E15 would be made available all year round. In addition, I dramatically increased the number of fueling stations where E15 could be sold across the country, by letting them use the existing pumps. I will cancel every Kamala-Biden policy that is brutalizing our farmers. We won't just increase Ethanol production in our own country, we will make it our mission to export ethanol all over the world.

As president, what actions would you take to ensure that the federal government's regulatory burden on businesses such as farming and ranching is consistent with congressional intent? Will you support regulatory reform to ensure that federal regulations meet a cost-benefit test and make the process of writing new regulations more transparent, and if so, how?

Kamala Harris

I know that excessive red tape can sometimes prevent small businesses, including small farms and ranches from selling their goods. They also know that it can be difficult for small farmers and ranchers to identify and comply with unnecessarily burdensome regulatory requirements. If they are elected, Vice President Harris and Governor Walz will fight to reduce barriers and make it easier for farmers, ranchers, and other small business owners across the country to earn a living and support a family off their hard work. The Biden-Harris Administration has pushed to improve and modernize the process of regulatory review, enhance public participation, and improve regulatory analysis.

Donald Trump

I will slash regulations that stifle American agriculture and make everything more expensive. I will implement transparency and common sense in rulemaking. During my Presidency, our Department of Agriculture cut 7 old regulations for every 1 new regulation, saving farmers and taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year. In total, American households saved an average of \$11,000 thanks to our regulatory reduction efforts, while the Biden-Harris administration has already imposed additional regulatory costs of \$10,000 per household, and those costs are estimated to increase an additional \$5,000 per year. In my next term, the Trump Dividend will be even larger. By repealing the Biden-Harris regulatory onslaught, we can save you an estimated \$20,000 dollars—\$5,000 per year. And be sure regulations are responsive to the needs of everyday Americans.

As president, how would you ensure that rural Americans have economic opportunity, greater access to broadband and healthcare, and well-maintained infrastructure to move food, fiber and fuel to consumers and ports, which are all necessary for a sustainable future?

Kamala Harris

I believe a healthy, vibrant rural America is essential to our nation's success.

I have addressed rural health care, mental health, the opioid epidemic, and more. Vice President Harris will make affordable health care a right, not a privilege by expanding and strengthening the Affordable Care Act and making permanent the Biden-Harris tax credit enhancements that are lowering health care premiums by an average of about \$800 a year for millions of Americans. She'll build on the Biden-Harris Administration's successes in bringing down the cost of lifesaving prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries by extending the \$35 cap on insulin and \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket spending for seniors to all Americans. Her tie-breaking vote on the Inflation Reduction Act gave Medicare the power to go toe to toe with Big Pharma and negotiate lower drug prices. As President, she'll accelerate the negotiations to cover more drugs and lower prices for Americans. As Vice President, she also announced that

medical debt will be removed from credit reports, and helped cancel \$7 billion of medical debt for 3 million Americans. As President, she'll work with states to cancel medical debt for even more Americans.

I have also worked to expand access to health care in rural America, dedicating \$100 million to grow the workforce of registered nurses and nurse practitioners, especially for rural communities, and expanded support for rural hospitals with \$500 million in Emergency Rural Health Care Grants. She has taken action to address our nation's mental health crisis by ensuring mental health coverage will be covered at the same level as other health care for Americans, securing record funding to hire and train over 14,000 mental health professionals for our schools, and expanding access to mental health services with \$10 million in dedicated funding for rural areas. She has also helped provide a \$50 million initiative to support opioid treatment and recovery services in rural communities.

I am committed to creating economic opportunity in rural America. Through the once-in-a-generation actions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Vice President Harris and President Biden channeled historic investments to deliver affordable high-speed internet, safe roads and bridges, modern wastewater systems, clean drinking water, reliable and affordable electricity, and good-paying jobs in rural communities. Vice President Harris has helped bring high-speed internet access to more than 622,000 people in rural areas with a \$90 billion investment to fight for reliable, affordable high speed internet for everyone in America.

I plan to expand the Rural Partners Network nationwide, ensuring that communities across America's heartland have federal resources available to them that are often too difficult to access. They also have set a goal to see 25 million new small business applications in their first term, including by cutting red tape that makes it harder for businesses to launch and grow, expanding the startup expense deduction from \$5,000 to \$50,000, creating innovation hubs, and expanding venture capital and other innovative financing to all of America, including rural America. Vice President Harris and Governor Walz will lower the costs of housing, including by building three million more affordable homes and rental units to end the national housing supply crisis in her first term and provide first-time homebuyers with up to \$25,000 to help with their down payments.

Donald Trump

I am proud to be the candidate who has consistently had overwhelming support from rural America. I believe, with all my heart, that our rural communities are absolutely critical to this country – and I have proven that by my actions. While many in Washington deride rural America as “flyover country,” I know that every one of those communities is home to American families, and they deserve a government who cares about them and their unique needs. As President, I will once again commit to investing billions of dollars to expand rural broadband and improve

rural infrastructure. I will take decisive action to slash regulatory approval times for critical infrastructure. I will take bold action to deploy high-speed 5G networks, improve rural healthcare, and bring prosperity to distressed rural communities across America. And perhaps most importantly, I will ensure that the United States has the lowest cost of energy, electricity, and gasoline on earth. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to the high-cost-of energy policy of “net-zero”, including banning the sale of gasoline powered cars and pickup trucks, that would be the death knell of the rural way of life. I will repeal net zero policies, including the very expensive Electric Vehicle mandate, which will force many Americans in rural settings to buy expensive electric cars and trucks that they don’t want.

The Harris-Biden Electric Vehicle mandate if successful would crush the rural economy eliminating hundreds of thousands of rural jobs in the agriculture, energy and powdered metals industries. If rural America fails all America fails.