

Agriculture in the Midwest

In today's agricultural economy, a few issues arise in terms of government spending to aid farmers, the development of ethanol as an alternative fuel source, and the further research and development of more alternative fuels. With this being an election year, it is vitally important to understand the top candidates' plans and commitments to furthering the agricultural prowess of America. After all, without agriculture, this great nation would cease to be what it has become.

President Obama and his administration are advocates for developing alternate fuel sources including ethanol. According to ethanolproducer.com Obama has a "\$1 billion National Community Deployment Challenge proposal which would provide incentives for communities to install infrastructure necessary to support alternative fuel vehicles." A proposal this large clearly shows that President Obama is behind the development and use of alternate fuels in the United States. Besides the bill President Obama has also taken action that will directly impact the Federal Government "The President has issued a presidential memorandum that all federal car fleets 'must buy only 100 percent alternative fuel vehicles by the end of 2015.'"(biofueldigest.com) Both of these actions taken by the President bode well with the Midwest as it has the most fertile land in America, perfect for supporting the crops that ethanol fuel is made from.

President Obama stance on the federal farm system is that too much money for too long has been given out to large corporate farms, making it harder for family farms in rural America to succeed. Obama is a firm supporter of putting family farms first over large corporate farms who are regularly buying them out. Obama believes in the new farm bill which will take money given to large corporate farms and use it to help small farmers through tax breaks and insurance among other things. "The Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has worked tirelessly to strengthen rural America, maintain a strong farm safety net, and create opportunities for America's farmers and ranchers." (usda.gov)

The Romney campaign believes that the private sector should be developing new energy sources. He wants to make use of a "diverse range of fuels including natural gas in transportation" (Energy). Mitt Romney does believe in subsidizing ethanol, which is not well liked among his party, yet it is liked by farmers that produce vegetation used in the making of ethanol. As for his position on federal farm programs, Romney believes that spending money that we do not have should be taken out of the equation. Thus Romney is not in favor of federal farm programs as to cut some of the huge governmental spending and agrees with Paul Ryan's "\$30 billion" cuts and instead let the free market take charge in overcoming the prices farmers receive.

Federal farms are important in the Midwest because they are starting to replace family farms all over the Midwest and that is where a lot of the food for the country is going to be produced. The number of farmers leaving their homes every week is over 300 because of corporate farms taking over and buying the farmers out (“Sustainable Family Farms”).

Most ethanol fuel and alternative fuel pumps are found in the Midwest (“Beyond Fossil Fuel”). This means that these types of fuel not only generate money from the sales but also the fuels are also made of corn and other crops. So money is being generated from the sale of crops to the fuel manufacturers.

With this basic understanding of each candidate’s position on these issues, one can reasonably foresee the impact they will have on the economy and livelihood of the Midwestern states. Though nothing is for certain, one thing can be assured. Government investment in agriculture is vitally important to not only the Midwest, but as the United States as a whole. It is apparent that we must not rely on foreign fuel sources and a state of self-reliance must be adopted for the security of our future. That is what the Midwest is all about.

Works Cited

- "Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces New Obama Administration Efforts to Assist Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by Drought | USDA Newsroom." *Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces New Obama Administration Efforts to Assist Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by Drought | USDA Newsroom*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdamediafb?contentid=2012/07/0247.xml>>.
- Barrett, Wayne. "Mitt Romney Visits Subsidized Farms, Knocks Big Government Spending." *The Daily Beast*. Newsweek/Daily Beast, 24 June 2012. Web. 27 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/24/mitt-romney-visits-subsidized-farms-knocks-big-government-spending.html>>.
- "Beyond Fossil Fuel". <<http://www.beyondfossilfuel.com/ethanol/>>.
- "Energy." *Mitt Romney for President*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.mittromney.com/issues/energy>>.
- "Obama Orders 100% Alternative Fuels in Government by 2015." *Biofuels Digest*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.biofuelsdigest.com/bdigest/2011/05/26/obama-orders-100-alternative-fuels-in-government-by-2015/>>.
- "Obama Unveils Plan to Expand Alternative Fuels Infrastructure." *Ethanol Producer Magazine*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Sept. 2012. <<http://ethanolproducer.com/articles/8638/obama-unveils-plan-to-expand-alternative-fuels-infrastructure>>.

“Sustainable Family Farms”. <<http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues/familyfarms/>>.

Garrett Youngren

Sam Hoster

Joel Burger

Jeremy Eagle