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ngfa.org/newsletter | ngfa@ngfa.org | Editor: Sarah Gonzalez, NGFA

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NEWS

NGFA outlines ag records for vice presidential nominees

The article below provides an overview of each vice presidential nominee's agricultural policies. It highlights Gov. Tim Walz's track record, drawing from his tenure in the House of Representatives, including his work on the House Agriculture Committee, and his time as governor of Minnesota. Sen. J.D. Vance's positions are also detailed, focusing on the agricultural issues he has addressed since taking office in 2023.

Democratic VP pick Gov. Tim Walz

Vice President Kamala Harris introduced Minnesota Governor Tim Walz as her running mate in the 2024 presidential race this week.

House of Representatives

Walz served as a member of the House from 2007 to 2019, representing Minnesota's rural 1st congressional district. He was a member of the House Agriculture Committee from 2007 until he became governor. Within the committee, he served on the House Agriculture Forestry Subcommittee and the House Agriculture Commodity Markets, Digital Assets, and Rural Development Subcommittee. Additionally, he held the position of highest-ranking Democrat on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

As a congressman, Walz was known for his strong support of agriculture and policies that strengthened the rural economy. He was a vocal advocate for renewable fuels and played a role in drafting and passing the 2008, 2014, and 2018 farm bills. He supported a strong safety net for farmers, conservation

programs, rural development initiatives, and the expansion of agriculture markets.

He introduced legislation to protect critical habitats and improve soil health. He also led efforts to promote new and beginning farmers, including policies to improve opportunities for veterans transitioning to agriculture.

Walz has a record of voting against trade deals – a signal that the Democratic ticket would continue the Biden administration’s approach to a “worker-centered” trade policy that elevates labor and environmental standards above commercial interests. In Congress, Walz voted against a free trade deal with Peru in 2007 and opposed deals with Panama and Colombia. He reversed that trend by supporting a deal with South Korea in 2011. In 2015, he opposed legislation along with a majority of House Democrats that would have made it easier for former President Barack Obama to seal the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement between 12 Pacific Rim economies.



“We need a trade deal that's fair, that restricts currency manipulation, promotes ‘Made in America’ manufacturing, and opens foreign markets,” Walz said in a statement rejecting Obama’s trade promotion authority legislation. “Unfortunately, [trade promotion authority] — and by extension [trade adjustment assistance] — makes it so Congress cannot ensure that is the case.”

Governor

Since taking office in 2019, Governor Walz has been known for supporting progressive tax policies. He supports infrastructure investment with most of his record focused on road investment, including signing a substantial gas tax increase in 2023.

During his gubernatorial campaign in 2018, Walz promised to expand agricultural markets. In 2019, he highlighted the need for stable trade relations with China, following a delegation visit to Japan and South Korea.

Governor Walz has also been a proponent of expanding school breakfasts and lunches, signing a bill in 2023 that provided free school meals for children attending public and private schools.

Walz has collaborated with Republican Midwest governors to advocate for year-round sales of E15, which will take effect in 2025. He has also pushed for similar legislation within Minnesota. Additionally, he established a refundable sustainable aviation fuel tax credit in Minnesota, providing \$1.50 per gallon for sustainable aviation fuel produced or blended in the state and sold for use in planes departing from Minnesota airports.

In 2020, Walz also joined South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, and then-Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts – all Republicans – in asking the Trump administration’s EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler to reject 52 petroleum refiner applications for retroactive small refinery exemptions from the Renewable Fuels Standard.

He also set up a biodiesel task force to promote higher blends of biodiesel fuels and called on the Biden administration to issue executive orders encouraging more biofuel use. Walz proposed tightening the Clean Air Act by replacing aromatics in gasoline with higher-octane ethanol alternatives.

In May 2023, Governor Walz signed a bill legalizing recreational cannabis in Minnesota, a position he had supported since his gubernatorial campaign.

Republican VP pick Sen. J.D. Vance

Sen. J.D. Vance, R-Ohio, began his term in January 2023, entering the Senate without prior elected legislative experience. His background includes working as a state legislative staffer during college and as an aide to Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, after law school. Sen. Vance serves on the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee; Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; and the Special Committee on Aging. Most of the following record is based on things he has said or legislation from this Congress.



NGFA has worked with his office on rail safety. Vance is an original cosponsor, alongside Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, of the Railway Safety Act. The NGFA has maintained a neutral stance on this legislation.

Trade:

Sen. Vance advocates for economic nationalism, emphasizing the protection of American workers and industries in the context of global trade. He supports the use of tariffs and trade barriers to address what he views as unfair competition, particularly from countries like China. Vance has also expressed the need for “fair trade” agreements that tackle issues such as currency manipulation, intellectual property theft, and subsidies. While Vance was not in office when the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) was passed, he has shown support for its provisions, which align with his views on fair trade and the protection of American workers. He has voiced strong disapproval of USMCA’s predecessor the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Biofuels:

Sen. Vance has aligned himself with former President Donald Trump on issues related to energy and agriculture. While Vance has not made specific statements about ethanol and biodiesel, his alignment with Trump and representation of an agricultural state suggests potential support for pro-biofuel policies. Vance has also criticized the Biden administration’s energy policies, including the Inflation Reduction Act, indicating a preference for policies that prioritize domestic energy production, which may include biofuels.

Farm Bill/Ag Policy:

Since taking office, Sen. Vance has primarily focused on issues other than agriculture. He does not serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

In mid-March, Vance suggested the possibility of extending the current farm bill into 2025, allowing for more time to reach a long-term agreement. The Ohio Farm Bureau has named Vance a “Friend of Agriculture,” saying he has been “very attentive” to the concerns of Ohio farmers. Vance appears to support government supports for farmers, aligning with the general stance of his party.

Immigration:

Sen. Vance has been a strong advocate for building a wall on the southern border and supporting legislation to reduce illegal immigration. He also opposes any legislation that would allow illegal immigrants to become legalized workers.

Environmental Regulations/Regulatory Relief:

Sen. Vance supports reducing regulatory burdens on farmers, advocating for policies that simplify compliance and lower costs associated with federal regulations. He is cautious about environmental regulations that may impose additional costs on agricultural producers, advocating for a balance between environmental protection and the economic needs of the farming community.

Agriculture Legislation Sen. Vance has Co-sponsored:

- **Railway Safety Act:** Led by Sen. Vance and Sen. Brown, D-Ohio, the bill addresses safety requirements for rail carriers and trains transporting hazardous materials.
- **Protect Farmers from the SEC Act:** Led by Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., the bill would prohibit the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission from requiring disclosure of greenhouse gas emissions related to agricultural products.
- **AFIDA Improvements Act:** Led by Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind., the bill would tighten reporting disclosures for foreign investors in U.S. agriculture.
- **Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act:** Sponsored by Sen. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., Vance is one of 16 co-sponsors for a bill that would require schools to offer whole milk.
- **Spotted Lanternfly Research and Development Act:** A bipartisan bill led by Sen. John Fetterman, D-Pa., the bill focuses on finding ways to get rid of the pest.
- **Beagle Brigade Act:** A bipartisan bill led by Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., that would boost support for dogs used by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to identify foreign pests and diseases at ports of entry.

NGFA members can contact [Stephanie See](#), NGFA's vice president of legislative and public affairs, with comments or questions.

FDA and AAFCO end longstanding MOU

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) announced on Aug. 2 their [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) that outlines the two organizations' responsibilities for defining animal feed ingredients will not be renewed when it expires on Oct. 1, 2024.

For the past 17 years through the MOU (and informally for decades before that time), FDA has provided scientific expertise related to the safety and utility of proposed feed ingredients submitted for approval within the AAFCO ingredient definition process.

In response to the end of the MOU, AAFCO is considering establishing a new ingredient definition process that would utilize an expert panel to provide the necessary scientific review of proposed ingredients. AAFCO voted to further explore this concept on Aug. 7 during its Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

On Aug. 8, FDA issued a [CVM Update](#) that announced the release of the following documents regarding the transition phase after the expiration of the MOU:

- [Request for Comments \(RFC\)](#) that asks stakeholders to address specific questions and requests for information about the FDA's Food Additive Petition (FAP) and Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) Notification programs, to help the agency determine what changes, if any, may be needed to better serve public health and improve the path to market for new animal food ingredients.
- [Draft Guidance for Industry \(GFI\) #293](#) that explains despite the expiration of the MOU FDA generally does not intend to initiate enforcement action in response to the interstate marketing of

animal food ingredients that are listed in the ingredient definition chapter of the 2024 AAFCO Official Publication.

- [Draft GFI #294](#) that describes an [interim Animal Food Ingredient Consultation \(AFIC\) process](#) for firms to engage with FDA regarding ingredients for which firms may have otherwise used the AAFCO ingredient definition process. The interim process could be utilized while FDA evaluates its current Food Additive Petition and GRAS Notification programs for animal food.

NGFA issued the following statement regarding the end of the MOU:

“NGFA has strongly supported the long-standing relationship between FDA and AAFCO to define animal feed ingredients. The FDA/AAFCO ingredient definition process utilized federal and state expertise, along with stakeholder input, to ensure the safety and utility of ingredients, thereby protecting animal health, the safety of animal-based foods consumed by humans, and public health. FDA’s participation within the AAFCO process has been effective and yielded a comprehensive list of ingredients that promote a common understanding and acceptance within the industry, FDA and state regulators, consumers, and global trade partners. The process also provided harmonization between state and federal regulatory authorities that is vital.

“NGFA is disappointed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FDA and AAFCO that facilitates their current partnership to define feed ingredients will not be renewed when it expires on Oct. 1, 2024. However, we look forward to engaging with both AAFCO and FDA regarding future ingredient approval processes that will support the U.S. animal food industry, facilitate innovation, ensure the safety and utility of ingredients, and protect public health.”

NGFA urges Canadian government action to prevent rail strike

NGFA urged the Canadian government to take action to prevent a potential rail strike or lockout that would lead to shutdowns or slowdowns of rail-dependent facilities. In a [letter sent on Aug. 2](#) to the chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in the Canadian House of Commons, NGFA noted that a potential strike by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference would cause a significant disruption to the entire North American supply chain.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) is expected to decide no later than Aug. 9 on whether a work stoppage by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference would impact residents’ health and safety. If it is determined that there is no health and safety risk, workers can legally strike 72 hours later.

“As representatives of U.S. and Canadian agribusinesses that rely on rail transportation, we strongly urge action to avoid significant economic damage to North American supply chains and further uncertainty for rail customers if a new labor agreement is not reached before the end of the 72-hour period,” NGFA noted.

The livestock industry depends on rail for the timely delivery of feed grains and ingredients, while many facilities, such as biofuels operations, flour mills and other grain processors, require uninterrupted rail service, the letter stated. NGFA also noted that the timing of this potential shutdown is particularly troublesome as it coincides with the wheat, canola, barley and oats harvest when rail transportation needs are at their peak.

“Operational railroads are essential on both sides of the border for the integrated North American supply chain.” NGFA stated. “While we believe a negotiated solution is always the preferred outcome, the government should be prepared to move quickly if negotiations fail.”

Read the [Aug. 2 letter here](#).

After Canadian rail labor unions voted to strike in May, NGFA expressed these concerns in a similar [letter](#) to CIRB sent on May 21.

USDA grants \$300 million in funding for agricultural exports

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) this week announced an additional allocation of \$300 million through the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP) to enhance American agricultural exports.

Launched in 2023, RAPP was initially funded by \$1.2 billion from the Commodity Credit Corporation. USDA released the first \$300 million earlier this year attracting over a billion dollars in proposed market development projects.

Organizations interested in the second round of RAPP funding have until Oct. 4 to apply, with the USDA expecting to announce funding allocations by the end of this year.

For more details on the program and application process, visit fas.usda.gov/programs/regional-agricultural-promotion-program.

EVENTS

OSHA's Safe + Sound Week is Aug. 12-18

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is hosting its [Safe + Sound Week](#) on Aug. 12-18. Registration is available at osha.gov/safeandsoundweek.

Safe + Sound Week is a nationwide event held each August. This year the event will provide resources for businesses on job hazard analysis. More than 3,900 participated in Safe + Sound Week in 2023. OSHA's [Plan & Promote Your Participation](#) webpage includes activity ideas as well as graphics and other materials.

Register for live Harvest Safety Week webinar on Aug. 20

Register for the “[Best Practices in Onboarding New Employees](#)” webinar during NGFA’s fifth annual Harvest Safety Week on Aug. 19-23! Each year at the end of August, NGFA dedicates a week to sharing safety resources particularly relevant to the busy harvest season.



This year’s theme encourages members to “Participate, Prepare, Protect,” by participating in sharing Harvest Safety Week resources, preparing for hazards during the harvest season and protecting the employees that “transform America’s harvest” into food, fuel and fiber. One of the new resources available is a live webinar on Aug. 20 with People Spark Consulting.

Title: Best Practices in Onboarding New Employees

Date: Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024, at noon CST (1:00 p.m. EST)

[Link to Register](#)

Description: “Did you know that organizations with a standard onboarding process experience 50 percent greater new-hire productivity? And a good onboarding experience improves long-term job satisfaction by more than 2.6 times. We know that the key to business success is having productive and engaged employees – and having a good onboarding experience creates that foundation. This session will share and discuss best practices for onboarding new employees. As this session aligns with Harvest Safety Week, we will also discuss how these best practices apply to onboarding new employees to safety expectations and processes.”

* A recording of the webinar will be shared with everyone who registers.

NGFA and the [National Grain and Feed Foundation](#) make Harvest Safety Week possible. Thanks to the support of the Foundation, billboards and radio ads highlighting Harvest Safety Week 2024 will be displayed in several regions.

Members and non-members can sign up to receive NGFA’s Harvest Safety Week emails [here](#). Those already receiving NGFA emails will also receive Harvest Safety Week materials.

FSMA preventive controls training is Aug. 27-29

NGFA is partnering with Kansas State University to conduct another Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) preventive controls for animal food training on Aug. 27-29 in Manhattan, Kan.

The course delivers the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance curriculum recognized by the Food and Drug Administration as being adequate for training individuals who are responsible for developing and overseeing required animal food safety plans. The course also delivers accredited training on the application of hazard analysis and critical control point (HAACP) principles.

More information about the course and registration details are available at ngfa.org/feed-events-training/.

SUPPLEMENTS

Committee Spotlight: Sustainability Committee Chair Cory Winstead discusses goals and outlook

Cory Winstead, the general manager at FS Grain, LLC, is the chair of NGFA’s Sustainability Committee, which met for the first time in March 2024 at the NGFA’s annual convention in Orlando, Fla. NGFA formed the Sustainability Committee at the recommendation of NGFA members and the Committee Structure Task Force. The Association had previously formed a temporary task force on sustainability, in which Winstead also participated.

In the following Q&A, Winstead answers some questions about the goals of this committee and the role NGFA can play for the industry as sustainability commitments evolve throughout the supply chain.



Q: Sustainability is one of NGFA’s newest committees. What are some of the goals that have been outlined for the committee in its first meetings?

Winstead: “The primary mission of the committee is to help NGFA member companies create a more resilient and sustainable future for North American grain and feed supply chains. Our work aims to advance food security, resource optimization and economic growth via knowledge sharing, partnerships, and influencing domestic and global policy as it concerns sustainability issues.

“Many sustainability initiatives that companies have undertaken are voluntary in nature and are being driven by market forces. When these initiatives intersect with the grain and feed industry, we want to be engaged and work to achieve positive outcomes for NGFA-member companies.

“Some specific committee work examples include comments to the SEC on Scope 3 emission reporting rules, providing input to USDA as it implements its Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities Program and aspects of the Growing Climate Solutions Act, and participating in the Field to Market coalition and Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance.

“One of our top priorities is implementing a framework for sharing sustainability information with the rest of NGFA membership.”

Q: Why do you believe it is important for NGFA to have a Sustainability Committee? How will the rest of the NGFA membership benefit from its work?

Winstead: “Many consumer package goods companies that buy and use U.S. grain and feed products are making decisions in this space that affect how commodities are grown, handled and transported.

“For example, most sustainability programs have some sort of traceability or chain of custody standards. For the majority of NGFA members, the most efficient and effective way to store and distribute commodities is in a commingled manner. This way of handling products can most easily accommodate mass balance accounting for traceability purposes. If entities seeking identity-preserved grain and feed will participate in the cost of specialized handling systems, that can be an option for willing parties. NGFA and its member companies need to be at the table while these programs are being developed and implemented to ensure our industry has a voice.

“It is clear the topic of sustainability is here to stay. NGFA members will benefit from the Association having a committee in place that consists of individuals with sustainability expertise who can actively engage in relevant topics, whether they be voluntary programs or regulatory proposals. Members will also benefit from the knowledge and information gathered and shared by the committee.”

Q: “Sustainability” is often perceived as a marketing buzzword. How do committee members address this?

Winstead: “The term is used very broadly across all industries and groups. However, the impact of programs being implemented to influence how commodities are grown, how they move throughout the supply chain and how much money can be made have real-world consequences. “Sustainability” can apply to many things, but often the term encompasses environmental, social and governance issues and how companies handle these topics. One of our committee goals is to provide information to NGFA members that can help them navigate sustainability topics relevant to their operations.”

Q: Why did you decide to volunteer your time to serve on the Sustainability Committee?

Winstead: “There is value in the NGFA committee system, networking and participating in general.

“The issues being tackled by the committee are pertinent to my career personally, but more importantly, will have long-term impacts on the entire agricultural supply chain. Members should provide input to

our association when developing policy. The best policy is produced from good debate and compromise.”

Extra Supplements

NGFA in the news:

RFD-TV: [With rail issues stemming from Mexico, what does it mean for harvest?](#)

Brownfield: [Limited rail capacity in Mexico a concern for U.S. trade](#)

Grain Journal: [NGFA, ag groups, spotlight rail capacity concerns in Mexico](#)

Red River Farm Network: [Mexican Rail Issues Under Scrutiny](#)

DTN: [Farmers May Lose Higher Bonus Depreciation, But Water Resources Bill Passes](#)

World Grain: [US Senate passes bill supporting inland waterway projects](#)

Other news:

Bloomberg: [EPA Probes Biodiesel Supply Chains as Fraud Concerns Mount](#)

DTN: [Minnesota Farmers Offer Their Take on Farm Bill, Politics, Gov. Tim Walz](#)

E&E: [Tim Walz’s balancing act on agriculture](#)

Agri-Pulse: [Housing costs are driving millennials to spend more—and it is affecting food prices](#)

The Daily Yonder: [Young Americans Returning to Rural for More than Just Holiday Dinners](#)

NGFA | 1400 Crystal Drive | Suite 260 | Arlington | VA | 22202