

County News

Town & Country Concerns Debated



Agricultural Forum hosted by Families Feeding Families. Zane Williams, president of Families Feeding Families Organization, set the stage by introducing Mike Stevens, Paul Harens, Julie Auch, Lauren Nelson, and Sarah Carda for the nights Forum. All the legislator candidates were in attendance and the forum would be about with the groups mission to bring education on agricultural topics and for the audience to fill out post cards on questions that are important topics to farmers and ranchers in District 18.

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Question 1: It has been 3 years since the state of South Dakota merged the Department of Agriculture with the Department of Natural Resources (Game, Fish, and Parks). How do you feel about the combination of merged departments both pro and con?

Mike Stevens on Question 1: "I wasn't really supportive of combining the two and I think agriculture needs to have its own department".

Paul Harens on Question 1: "I think we should have our own department".

Julie Auch on Question 1: "When I went to Pierre and understand in serving on the Ag Committee for the past 2 years, so many different ballot issues come into our committee and we really need to have those areas split".

Lauren Nelson on Question 1: "When this was discussed and brought about it didn't really make sense of combining these two because I think they are two very different entities".

Sarah Carda on Question 1: "so it would be nice to have them separated once again", "there are some things that uh are done in the agriculture world that is often not necessarily seen as environmental".

Question 2: Carbon is an essential element for the production of the oxygen by plants through photosynthesis while the current push for carbon sequestration has not answered the question of what impact reduced carbon dioxide will have on oxygen production of crops in the US what do you feel needs to be done to ensure that another climate crisis won't be brought on by this lack of thought towards carbon and the reduction of it?

Sarah Carda on Question 2: "um obviously I support private property rights and that's very very important I do think there's so much that is misunderstood about the carbon and carbon capture whether that is good or whether or not or we're paying people to do that um but there's definitely some things we need to be worried about environmentally".

Lauren Nelson on Question 2: "why are we taking carbon dioxide out of atmosphere or wanting to here in South Dakota putting it in a pipeline and burying it in North Dakota when its worth money? makes no sense to me." "carbon sequestration should be

happening at the ethanol plants. CO2 is worth money"

Julie Auch on Question 2: "Carbon Dioxide is plant food", "they want to put CO2 in a pipeline for the 45Q tax credits", "45Q tax credits are paying \$85 per cubic ton and then put it in a hole", "it's a valuable commodity but upon doing it they're infringing upon multiple property rights in reference to RL21", "I believe that CO2 should remain plant food and if we are going to sequester it should be sequestered so that we can use it as a natural resource"

Pauls Harens on Question 2: "problems I foresee with this bill itself was um 6 theres a problem it takes away the rights of people", "I think the Governor Noem will make the final decision"

Mike Stevens on Question 2: "well at some point somebody has to have a different opinion and that's me", "didn't think it was a commodity, but it goes from South Dakota to North Dakota put it in holding ground", "people talk about they're taking our land, no they're not taking your land, they're taking land your not using underneath".

Question 3: Senate Bill 201 was passed and then earlier this year Grassroots efforts got it placed on the ballot as referred law 21. How will you vote on RL 21?

Paul Harens on Question 3: "that's not a decision I could make because I don't know. I would call guys, I already got a list about 5 farmers."

Julie Auch on Question 3: "well I voted no and it was a firm no", "this bill has six to nine different parts of our law in it our Constitution states every single bill should have one subject matter"

"I would encourage every single person in this room, if you value your local control and value the local land owners in SD to vote no on RL 21"

Lauren Nelson on Question 3: "SB201 no. RL21 no. plain and simple", "what we got are going on over here that we're not paying attention to with referred law 21, the money grab, the land grab, and the power grab"

Sarah Carda on Question 3: "I don't believe in eminent domain for private gain", "I think what it has done unfortunately has just served to be the division and grabbed on by some grassroots effort as far as um making what this election is all about and this isn't what the election is all about"

Mike Stevens on Question 3: "we talk about well these private companies are going to make this money but who are these private companies they're the ethanol plants they're the Poets these other groups that are our community that are making money and if they're having to spend their money to buy credits because of what Joe Biden did, okay that's not their fault, that's flat out good business", "Don't let them tell you it is a

permanent easement"

Question 4: Wind Turban project: Can you speak on your stance on an out of area company wanting to put windmills on agricultural zoned land and where legislation falls into the situation moving forward?

Julie Auch on Question 4: "the wind task force has been listening to individuals talk about their concerns", "I think that is great that's exactly what we need happening in our counties and in our districts we need to be able to decide what is happening in our neighborhoods", "unfortunately my daughter is going to have 12 wind turbines within 1/2 mile of her property", "we're talking producing energy in the state of South Dakota that's shipped off to another state and you are upon someone else's private property rights you need to put yourself in those shoes and ask yourself if that's something that you want surrounding your family".

Lauren Nelson on Question 4: "I am on the Yankton County Planning and Zoning board", "the fact that the land is zoned agriculture we're dealing with an industrial wind complex I don't find that compatible", "this one thing that you look at on the task force and wind task force and you look at the planning and zoning and the people that came and spoke", "variance conditional use permits need to be decided locally", "there is no better example of this in what is happening in Yankton County starting in January the task force and then the planning and zoning and then even the County Commission that is true democracy to true representative government".

Sarah Carda on Question 4: "one of the candidates for president this year likes to sum up his energy policy in three words drill baby drill and he's not all wrong because we are still facing shortages of energy and even Rounds when he was her last week said that we're going to need more energy to make sure that we are keeping up with the power that's artificial intelligence is going to bring us".

Mike Stevens on Question 4: "I think it is hypocritical because zoning clearly takes away your property rights, but we've had that happen all the time we got a dam out west of town and it takes somebody's property rights away for that and how much electricity is Yankton getting out of the Dam? "Zero"

Paul Harens on Question 4: "I served on a zoning board, one of the most difficult ones we had, you remembered, was the fight over the antenna that was 99 foot tall", "that goes to property rights the land was owned by somebody who had lived here and then moved to the Black Hills and they were the ones that gave the rights to it and individuals have that right now they wouldn't be building these wind towers here unless somebody wants them and somebody will accept them"

Question 5: We heard early that agriculture is a predominant industry in South Dakota and there is a trend of less small farmers and bigger farmers tend to take over - what are your ideas for legislature to help foster smaller farms, grow small communities, and schools across the state?

Lauren Nelson on Question 5: "We need to invest in our family farms, we need to invest in our new farmers, we need to invest in small business", "the

state of South Dakota giving money to a business who is undermining our livestock producers, how is anybody supposed to get started in farming when you have a state that's doing that? it's unacceptable. we need to make sure that our family farmers, our small business owners, our new farmers, are the first one's in line when it comes to loans"

Sarah Carda on Question 5: "if there's ways that we incentivize businesses all the time in state and especially in the city different places and it may be just something like that that we incentivize the small farm"

Mike Stevens on Question 5: "it is really difficult but I think there are a lot of different things kids can be doing, they're involved in the farming industry and I think that they can diversify in that regard and still be part of the farming community. I think that's where bankers have to come into play and provide something along that line because I don't think we as legislators should be looking at"

Paul Harens on Question 5: "this isn't something the legislature can do unless their going to fund it, and right now South Dakota doesn't have much funding"

Julie Auch on Question 5: "Developing our small communities is extremely important to me", "small farms and businesses are extremely important", "we need less regulations, we need less mandates, we need less government intrusion on our industry", "we should be using our land to produce food"

Closing Statements:

Mike Stevens closing statements: "If you want a legislature that's going to agree with you 100% of the time you got the wrong guy. I am more than willing to discuss and have a discussion with you, as far as the issues are concerned"

Paul Harens closing statements: "like I said is a little bit not my strong area", "I would talk to any one of you here"

Julie Auch closing comments: "I believe we are so blessed to live here in South Dakota", "if elected I pledge to ensure that our children and grandchildren inherit the Legacy we in South Dakota have long enjoyed civil liberties 2nd amendment rights private property rights pro-life legislation the rule of law Free Speech Financial Freedom religious freedom".

Lauren Nelson closing comments: "people tell me Lauren you look like you are on a mission heard that many times I am on a mission that mission is the people you the people of district 18 how could I not have a mission after listening to you since March telling me your concerns and issues that the mission is you and I want to take those concerns I want to take those issues and I want to go to Pierre and fight for you"

Sarah Carda closing comments: "what's interesting when I ask them what the biggest issues are, so many of them just stop and say, I'm not sure I have an issue, and what that tells me and what I say is that that must mean it's going pretty well", "we have a good district and we want to keep it good but things are going quite well and keep away from divisive issues. too often and I think that's a little bit about RL21 when it came up it was a perfect opportunity to be divisive to scare people in that kind of thing and I think we need to stay away from", "we need to find things that unite us and I'll tell you what unites us is education."