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Question1: Address the economic and development pressures that are driving small farmers out of the agricultural industry. In Northwest Florida, agricultural land is being converted to other land uses, such as housing development. There needs to be some mechanism to slow this conversion and to encourage new generations of people to enter ag production.

Question2: Remove the subsidies that encourage farmers to over-produce products that glut markets, such as corn. Also, help farmers respond to existing markets, rather than struggle to change foreign market preferences that disadvantage American producers in foreign markets, such as biotechnology.

Question3: Find a better way of defining "small" or "family-owned" farms/producers and then target these groups for support. This will sustain diversity in the industry and discourage centralization of ag production by huge, corporations, i.e., monopolies.

Question4: First, enforce (in good faith) existing regulations related to water/wildlife-habitat/air quality protection. Continue with programs that facilitate use of BMPs (e.g. CRP, ECP, EWP, EQIP, FLP, FSP, FIP, WRP, etc..) and penalize for poor natural resource stewardship activities.

The number one problem in Northwest Florida in terms of watershed protection is related to wasteful irrigation practices in Georgia. Also, as Florida's human population increases, there will be more use of ground and surface water for household use, which will cause problems for ag and natural systems. You must develop irrigation technologies that waste less water or encourage farmers to change crop production to fit local climate and growing conditions. You must create policies that penalize ag producers for wasting water. There needs to be more scrutiny of water management practices and use in the ag/industrial sector(s) and more effort to alter existing practices that waste water.

Question5: Invest in these areas and encourage others to do the same. Link up with efforts, groups and programs that serve these areas to enhance education, health care, and infrastructure opportunities. Created more local government and community grants and initiatives to help these communities help themselves.

Question6: Invest in and encourage organic and specialty, value-added production. This will help local/regional ag production.