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Question1: It is my understanding that independent farmers have a difficult, if not insurmountable, task competing with factory farms not only because of the higher land prices they pay, but also because of the mass production practices of the factories. Many farmers and ranchers end up working for these factory farms, having to follow their assembly line procedures and giving up their more humane, less polluting methods. Help new independent farmers by giving them the same land and/or tax breaks given to the factory farms and by subsidizing them for starting organic farms.

Question2: Being competitive entails more than the types of products demanded and their production. It involves the methods of production and disposal of waste. The U.S. has fallen behind many countries in making and enforcing strong rules protecting the food supply from the use of harmful chemical pesticides, hormones, and drugs, including antibiotics, which contaminate the farm animals either directly or through their feed. This in turn is a public safety risk for consumers. Eliminate inhumane farm practices such as battery cages for laying hens, crates for pregnant sows and veal calves, and introduce and enact more humane laws and practices in transport and slaughter of farm animals. Build the public's trust by having the USDA get back into inspecting by getting rid of HACCP practices to ensure that the farm factories comply with meat safety and humane slaughter regulations. Include poultry and fish in the HMLSA then enforce the HMLSA by having USDA inspectors observe on the killing floors. Then the U.S. will be more competitive with European markets who already perform these practices.

Question3: The current program may lead to increased production but at whose expense? The large factory farms and slaughterhouses with their often inhumane treatment of poultry and animals, and often their noncompliance with pollution and waste disposal regulations shouldn't be rewarded. They are given the advantage over the small and medium sized farms which can't compete. Assistance shouldn't be based on production levels at any cost. Those farmers who grow organic crops, use humane farming methods, don't feed mammalian materials to animals, don't use synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and no hormones should be rewarded with assistance. Let's put ethics back into the once noble farming profession.

Question4: The natural environment suffers in many ways from several factory farming practices. For instance, when a "lagoon" (open-air pit filled with urine and manure) is ruptured it causes a massive fish kill, or when manure is overapplied and runs off the land into waterways which causes pollution in the groundwater and also depletes it. "Sprayfields" are another threat. When waste is overapplied to the fields, it runs off into rivers and streams, and also increases the evaporation and vaporization of pollutants into the air. Eliminate them as they threaten the environment and public health. Some solutions are: 1) Close the loopholes in the pollution laws and regulations and strengthen the enforcement 2) Tighten controls on the release of pathogens into the

environment 3) Exercise greater oversight on factory farms' pollution reduction plans and ensure these plans are available to the public by having factory farms (they are industrial facilities) obtain permits, monitor water quality and pay for cleaning up, and monitor waste disposal 4) Make food supply safe by not using mammalian materials and feces for animal, poultry, and fish feed 5) Local governments must have a say in whether to allow factory farms in their communities. The public is entitled to review and comment on the contents of pollution reduction plans and to enforce the terms where a f.f. is in violation 6) EPA must consider recent technology advances that significantly reduce pathogens 7) States and the federal government should promote methods of raising livestock that reduces the concentration of animals by setting minimum space allowances that allow the animals freedom to live according to their natural behaviors. Use manure safely -- keep animal waste drier which limits problems with spills, runoff and air pollution 8) Smaller factory farms should be included in the regulations applied to the industrial facilities so as to improve their practices and take advantage of technical assistance for pollution reduction programs 9) Encourage organic farming and the use of non-synthetic pesticides.

Question 5: (skip)

Question 6: Increase organic farming, and no genetic engineering. Use vegetable oils instead of gasoline to run vehicles.