



South Dakota Farm Bureau®



CANDIDATE Q&A

Governor Larry Rhoden

Tell us about your view of agriculture's role and impact on the state currently and where you believe it should be for the future?

Agriculture is king in South Dakota. It's our number one industry, and it's how I've made my living for more than 40 years, so I understand both the opportunities and the challenges that farmers and ranchers face. I've lived them too.

Looking ahead, agriculture will remain king, but it also needs to evolve and grow. That means expanding value-added agriculture, so we're not only producing commodities, but creating more opportunities here at home and getting better commodity prices for our producers.

Agriculture built this state. As governor, I'll make sure it remains the foundation of our economy and our future.

If elected, what is your vision and action plan to support and grow agricultural markets and value-added agriculture for South Dakota producers?

My vision is to make sure South Dakota raises the best livestock, grows the best crops, and adds more value to what we produce. That means supporting value-added agriculture, expanding processing capacity, opening new domestic and international markets, and investing in the infrastructure needed to move products efficiently.

I've participated in numerous trade missions to promote South Dakota products around the world. I've seen firsthand the importance of building relationships that create new opportunities for our producers.

My administration will continue partnering with farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, and trade organizations to strengthen existing markets, develop new ones, encourage innovation, and ensure more of the value created by South Dakota agriculture stays here at home.

Food security is national security. My emphasis on food security, value-added ag, and infrastructure is a key component of my focus on national security as South Dakota's "next big industry."

Young farmers and ranchers face significant barriers to entering and establishing themselves within the industry including access to capital, acquiring land or livestock and achieving profitability. What specific policies or initiatives would your administration pursue to support the next generation of agriculture producers?

I spent more than 40 years making my living in agriculture. I know firsthand how difficult it can be to get started. Young farmers and ranchers are the future of South Dakota agriculture, and we need to give them every opportunity to succeed.

I support expanding access to affordable financing through programs like the Beginning Farmer Bond Program. As governor, I lowered interest rates on Rural Development loans to help producers invest in land, livestock, and equipment.

I also committed \$200,000 to support the Keep Farmers Farming initiative. This program helps families successfully transition their farms and ranches to the next generation. That's critical to the future of South Dakota agriculture.

My commitment to these programs will continue. Together, we'll reduce barriers to entry and ensure the next generation has every opportunity to build a successful operation. That's how we keep South Dakota agriculture strong for generations to come.

Property taxes are a top concern for farmers and ranchers. What is your property tax plan and how would your administration protect agricultural landowners from property tax increases or tax shifts while ensuring a fair and stable tax system?

During my years in the state legislature, I was a leader in creating the productivity system for ag property taxation. This system has helped to protect producers and lead to fairer tax assessments, and I helped implement this system with years of work as a legislator on the Agricultural Land Assessment Implementation and Oversight Advisory Task Force.

The productivity system protects agricultural landowners from unfair property tax increases and provides a predictable tax structure for short grass and row crop producers alike. Every system can be improved, but I am committed to the principles in law today.

This year, we delivered statewide property tax relief for homeowners, while protecting farmers, ranchers, and homeowners from unfair tax shifts. Don't forget, every farmer or rancher I know owns a home and pays owner-occupied taxes on it.

The statewide relief is funded by the state sales tax return to 4.5% from 4.2%, which was already set to take effect. In addition, the people in each county may choose to cut their own property taxes, and they can fund it with an optional half-cent sales tax.

My administration will continue to closely monitor assessments and tax burdens to ensure agricultural landowners are not forced to carry a disproportionate share.

Any future reforms must provide lasting relief, preserve South Dakota's productivity-based agricultural assessment system, and protect funding for schools and local services.

South Dakota has seen proposals come and go for livestock zoning, rural development, energy transmission, processing expansion or other major infrastructure projects. How would you balance economic development, private property rights, and the interests of agricultural landowners, and how will you ensure farmers and ranchers have a seat at the table for the conversation?

South Dakota can be a strong supporter of economic development without compromising our private property rights. Those who invest in our state should also expect predictable zoning and regulation.

I support responsible growth in livestock production, value-added agriculture, energy, processing, and rural infrastructure. But every project must respect private property rights, local control, and a transparent process.

Farmers and ranchers deserve a meaningful seat at the table from the very beginning, not after decisions have already been made. My administration will ensure producers have a voice through transparent permitting, early public engagement, and clear, consistent, predictable rules.

We can grow South Dakota's economy while respecting the land, the people who own it, and the communities that depend on it.

If elected, what is one action you would take in your first 100 days that would have the greatest positive impact on South Dakota farmers and ranchers?

A new term brings with it a new legislative session, so we'll focus on delivering a balanced budget. We'll get to work planning and executing on more trade missions. And

I will continue my focus on making national security South Dakota's "next big industry," and food security is an indispensable part of that.

At the same time, I will continue cutting unnecessary regulations, protecting private property rights, and ensuring state government remains a reliable partner for agriculture so producers can focus on what they do best; feeding our state and the world.