**Iowa Organic Association 2016 Policy Planks**

**General Support for Organic:** We support a farmer’s right to farm as they see fit as long as the practices used do not infringe on the rights of others. These rights include clean air and water, the ability of future generations to successfully farm, and the rights of farmers to use alternative growing practices on nearby farms without fear of loss due to the actions of a neighbor. It is a farmer’s responsibility to adopt practices that support a healthy and diverse environment and use techniques that prevent chemical drift, promote soil health and protect water quality. We believe it should be the government’s role to support sustainable and organic agricultural practices, education and research. Similarly, the government should discourage actions that are shown to have deleterious effects on the quality of our shared natural resources.

**Labeling of GMOs:** We believe that people have a right to know what is in their food; and thus, the FDA should require mandatory labeling of GMO ingredients. Studies show that more than 90% of Americans support mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods (GMOs). State and Federal officials are urged to support mandatory, on-package GMO labeling at the State and Federal levels.

**Pesticide Drift:** We believe that pesticides should not travel away from the intended area of application and that pesticide applicators have a responsibility to apply pesticides so that they do not cross property borders. Pesticide drift can damage neighboring crops and it can cause bodily harm to people and animals when it drifts off-target. State and Federal officials are urged to better execute their delegated responsibility to regulate pesticide drift and enforce the federal pesticide label requirements around pesticide drift.

**Water Quality:** Recent research published by USDA Agricultural Research Service in Ames and Iowa State University in the journal *Sustainable Agriculture Research* showed that a typical organic crop rotation reduced farm nitrate leaching by nearly 50 percent, compared to the conventional Iowa corn and soybean rotation. Iowa’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy calls for a 41 percent reduction in nitrate leaching across Iowa agriculture. Changing to an organic cropping system could *by itself* achieve the goals of the INRS for those farms that make that conversion. We believe that subsidizing the transition of conventional farmers to organic management is the most cost-effective and efficient way to achieve the water quality goals of INRS. State and federal officials should recognize and fund financial and technical assistance programs that help Iowa farmers transition to organic agriculture to mitigate nitrogen pollution in our waterways.