



## Session Six Hand-out

### Things You Can Do to Help Create a Better Rural Future

**Purpose:** Engage participants in a discussion about opportunities for them to help create a better rural future ranging from very limited involvement to more significant leadership roles. Challenge participants to accept responsibility for contributing to the solution to rural problems.

**Directions:** Ask group to read silently the opportunities to get involved in creating a better rural future. As a group, brainstorm other ways of getting involved. Then discuss the following questions: 1) What are our responsibilities as Christians and citizens of a democracy for the betterment of our community and agriculture?; 2) What activities would fit your interests and abilities?; 3) What steps will you take? (You will be invited to fill out a covenant form at the end of this session.)

**A. Extend this study to others in your community.** The Center for Rural Affairs is available to help guide you through the study 402/687-2100 or [info@cfra.org](mailto:info@cfra.org)

**B. Learn more and write or call your federal and state representatives** – Sign on to the mailing list of *The Center for Rural Affairs* and join the *Rural Action Network*. You will receive the Center's monthly newsletter on rural issues and action alerts to let you know when your call or letter to your representative could make a difference. The Center for Rural Affairs, PO Box 136, Lyons, NE 68038, 402/687-2100, [www.cfra.org](http://www.cfra.org), [info@cfra.org](mailto:info@cfra.org)

**C. Invite a speaker to a church or community group.** Ask them to speak about opportunities for your community or parish to participate in existing programs to support rural development or to address rural issues. Possibilities include:

- ✠ A speaker from The Center for Rural Affairs on its efforts to strengthen family farms, beginning farmers and ranchers, conservation programs, rural community development or how the Center can help your community foster small business development.
- ✠ A speaker from Community Organizing in Nebraska (COIN) on how your church could join its effort. Contact Tom Holler, 7262 Mercy Rd. Suite 102, Omaha, NE 68124, 402/968-7665,
- ✠ A speaker from within your community or within your denomination involved in these issues.

- ✘ A speaker from the Nebraska Community Foundation in Lincoln, NE on how communities can foster charitable giving to benefit community development through estate plans. 231 Mabel Lee Hall, UNL, Lincoln, NE 68588-0234, 402/472-5400.

**D. Form a rural action group in your community or parish** – In that group, develop strategies to influence your state and federal representatives. For example, your group could request a meeting with your representative or their staff. It could organize a local letter writing campaign to your state or federal representatives or sponsor a public meeting on rural issues to involve more people in your area. The Center for Rural Affairs can provide materials and assistance.

**E. Work within existing organizations** – Sponsor resolutions at county meetings and state conventions of existing farm, commodity and business organizations to make their policies more supportive of family farms, small business and rural communities.

**F. Support small farmers globally** by purchasing Fair Trade products such as coffee, tea, and chocolate for your church and personal use. One source for these products is *Equal Exchange* at [www.equalexchange.com](http://www.equalexchange.com)., 50 United Drive, West Bridgewater, MA 02379, 774/776-7400