

## GLI 2019 Statewide Candidate Survey

### Ryan Quarles for Commissioner of Agriculture

1. As Commissioner of Agriculture, what would be your office's top legislative priorities in Frankfort?

My office's top legislative priorities will be the same as they have been since taking office. Namely, working with our elected officials to promote Kentucky's diverse agricultural economy, protect our farmers from harmful policies and over-regulations and work for the betterment of both urban and rural Kentucky. Specifically, we will work with our colleagues in Frankfort to expand markets for our farmers, including industrial hemp and other speciality crops. We will also fight to ensure that the Department of Agriculture is well-funded so we can continue to serve our mandated role as Kentucky's largest consumer protection agency.

2. How could the Commissioner's office better facilitate partnerships and engagement between businesses in urban regions and farmers and agricultural ventures in rural Kentucky?

Connecting Kentucky's 76,000 family farms and our large, diverse urban communities has been a cornerstone of our Administration. From expanding Kentucky's farmer's market presence to starting the LAND program, an outreach initiative that connects agriculture and manufacturing, we have worked day-in and day-out to connect our rural and urban regions. Additionally, we have worked with our elected officials in Lexington and Louisville to promote getting more Kentucky Proud produce into restaurants and schools and have worked tirelessly to make sure that Kentucky is well-placed to serve as the agriculture tech hub of the United States.

3. What steps would you take to help Kentucky-based agricultural businesses more effectively compete in domestic and international markets?

Expanding international trade has been a top goal during my time as Commissioner. Just in the past three years, we have led the first-ever agricultural trade mission to Canada, worked with the Federal government to open up live equine exports to China and constantly advocated for fair and open trade for Kentucky's agricultural products. As a net-exporting agriculture state, it is crucial that we look to other states and countries to expand markets for our farmers. In the next four years, we will continue to ensure that our farmers have access to as many potential markets as possible. Working with the state economic development cabinet and Kentucky's many commodity groups, we will pursue a united front to fight for all of our rural communities. As any farmer will tell you, we don't want hand-outs, we want access to markets. That is the policy we will continue to pursue the next four years.

4. What would be your top environmental priorities as Commissioner?

Farmers are the best stewards of the land in the world. We work everyday to pass our sacred land down to the next generation and, contrary to popular belief, we know that clean land means better harvests and longevity.

While some may think that more regulations means better protections, I firmly believe that the farmer, that ultimate authority on what is best for their homestead, knows how to keep their water clean and their land secure. We fought against over-bearing regulations like the Water of the US (WOTUS) rule and worked to implement common-sense, farmer-friendly regulations instead of letting a far-off bureaucrat tell us what to do. My top priority, as always, will be to make sure we can pass down our way of life to the next generation of Kentucky farmers.