

## CANDIDATES FOR UNITED STATES SENATE

*Note: Independence Party challenger Dean Barkley declined the opportunity to be included in The Land's election guide.*



### **NORM COLEMAN (R) Incumbent**

**Age:** 59 **Family:** Wife, Laurie; two children, Jake and Sarah  
**Education:** B.A. Hofstra, 1971; J.D. Univ. of Iowa Law School, 1976  
**Public service:** 17 years in Attorney General's office; Mayor of St. Paul 1994-2002; U.S. Senator 2003-present



### **AL FRANKEN (DFL) Challenger**

**Age:** 57 **Family:** Wife and two children  
**Education:** B.A. Harvard, 1973 **Public service:** USO, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, Congressional Hunger Center, Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy

**Q1** As you represent Minnesota in Washington, D.C., how would you assure that the concerns of farmers and rural residents are heard?

As a member of the Senate ag committee, I broke the logjam on the farm bill and helped override two vetoes. I worked to pass the Water Resources Development Act and helped put Minnesota fifth in rural development funding. I helped pass a highway bill giving Minnesota the second-largest funding increase. I worked to create and expand the Renewable Fuels Standard and incentives for wind, biodiesel and ethanol. I have always stood with Minnesota farm families and Greater Minnesota. My commitment will not waver.

Minnesota has a proud farming tradition. I have made it very clear that upon arriving in Washington, I want to be on the agriculture committee and join Sen. Klobuchar and Chairman Peterson to advocate on behalf of Minnesota's farming, agribusiness and food manufacturing industries. I'll fight for the necessary infrastructure, economic development investment as well as responsible trade deals that keep the interests of Minnesota's farmers and rural families in mind.

**Q2** What is the biggest issue facing Minnesota agriculture today, and what can be done to solve that problem?

We must bring down energy prices that are driving-up production costs. I am part of three efforts: first, authorizing oil and gas production on the OCS, creating new supplies and tamping down speculation; second, transitioning 85 percent of all new vehicles from petroleum to renewables within 20 years while authorizing OCS oil and gas production; and third, using federal revenues from oil and gas development to finance wind transmission, CO<sub>2</sub> pipelines, nuclear, biofuel pipelines and E-85 corridors.

The rising cost of fuel affects all those involved in Minnesota's agriculture — costing profits each time they fill up the tank, purchase fertilizers, or buy feed for livestock. We'll be able to work toward energy independence, and decrease the cost of fuel — especially biomass and biofuels in the form of cellulosic ethanol incentives. Even better, the fuel sources and new jobs created will be right here, close to home, growing in the fields, ready to be processed into energy in our rural communities.

**Q3** Where do you stand on the use of subsidies and mandates to support ethanol, biodiesel and other renewable/alternative energies?

I helped create and expand the Renewable Fuels Standard and worked to maintain the ethanol tax credit and tariff so we do not simply shift dependence from foreign oil to foreign biofuels. I worked to create the biodiesel tax credit and have consistently supported extension and improvements to wind energy tax credits. I voted to take away tax breaks for oil and gas and redirect funding to promote renewables, and I have worked with livestock producers to authorize Section 32 purchases and a feed-cost adjuster in the MILC program.

On the very first day of my campaign, I called for an "Apollo Program" to fundamentally change our energy policy and end our reliance on foreign oil. This Apollo Program will provide federal financial support for research into new forms of renewable energy and development of currently identified sources to make them more efficient — corn ethanol and other biofuels, as well as solar and wind power.

**Q4** Where does responsibility lie in controlling employment of illegal immigrants in ag-related industries?

We need a visa program that works so employers who are held responsible for their workforce have legal certainty. I support immigration reform, including much of the AgJOBS bill. Most Americans expect their government to secure our borders and provide no pathway to citizenship for those entering our country illegally. These will be the guideposts to bring people out of the shadows through reform of our visa programs so those programs actually work.

We need comprehensive immigration reform so that farmers know that they're going to have a legal guest worker program. Many farmers rely on guest workers to help milk their cows and harvest their crops. This is a complicated issue. We need to enforce immigration laws at the workplace, and do it by having documentation that can't be forged. We need an immigration policy that is tough on lawbreakers, humane to everyone, and most of all, fair — to our taxpayers, to our law enforcement officers, and to our American values.

**Q5** Describe your position on the use of tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers to agricultural imports.

We have among the lowest tariffs in the world, about 12 percent, compared to a world average of 62 percent, so we need to reduce foreign tariffs to provide access for American farmers. The United States also relies on sound science when making phytosanitary and sanitary regulations while other countries resort to bogus regulations aimed at keeping our products out. So we must insist that sound science prevail in global trade. We have a right to demand that the trade practices employed by other countries are fair.

In 2005, agriculture was a \$9.6 billion industry — Minnesota's second-largest industry. The World Trade Organization restricts the use of tariffs to protect trade interests of national producers. As a result, some parties support non-tariff barriers to imports such as anti-dumping measures, countervailing duties or genetically modified organism restrictions. I support trade agreements if they work for Minnesota.

**Q6** Is there a place for both organic production and cutting-edge biotechnology, and should government promote one over another?

Organic agriculture provides an opportunity for farm families to sell quality products at a premium so we need to ensure that rules stay in place so this opportunity continues. Biotechnology has allowed us to provide the safest, most abundant, most affordable food supply in the world, keeping pace with the demands of a hungry world. Both farming practices have their place in providing this country and much of the world with high-quality food.

Both organic and agriculture biotechnology have a place in our fields. Biotechnology will help Minnesota farmers lead the world in renewable energy. Through technology we see improvements in yields, drought and pesticide resistance. And organic fruits and vegetables are becoming more popular and more profitable. The federal government shouldn't choose between conventional and organic farming — it should encourage both.

**Q7** What responsibilities do Minnesota's farmers and ranchers have in protecting the state's soil, air and water quality?

Farmers are the first stewards of the land. The conservation practices of farmers give us cleaner air and water, protect against soil erosion, and preserve wetlands and wildlife. While some propose costly new regulations, I support conservation cost-share programs that help our farmers. We provided record investment in conservation in the 2008 farm bill. The carrot is more effective than the stick.

Farmers are the original stewards of our lands. Through their environmentally friendly practices, they have had to protect their investments and think about the future. While we can't place undue burdens on farmers and the ag industry, we must recognize that the lakes and rivers in Minnesota and around the country are interconnected. Each industry has a role to play in protecting America's water. I will continue to support the best environmental practices and make it farmer friendly.

**Q8** How will the next generation of farmers be drawn to agriculture?

Farming is a risky business so we must create opportunities for beginning farmers to make a decent return on their investment. Sound energy policy creates new demand and a sound farm policy provides a strong safety net. Trade must be fair and create access for our producers. Preventing tax increases is important because higher taxes, including capital gains and death taxes, make it hard to make ends meet and to pass the farm on to the next generation. Holding the line on new regulations that drive-up production costs is key.

Minnesota has a proud rural tradition, and government can help draw the next generation to agriculture by making sure family farming remains financially viable. We can do that by enacting an energy policy that lowers energy costs and taps the massive potential of rural Minnesota. We do it by offering earned income tax credits for farmers who put up wind turbines. We do it by promoting rural economic development — rural broadband, infrastructure, good education, access to health care.

**Q9** Why should a rural Minnesota voter cast their ballot for you?

I understand that Minnesota farmers support our rural communities and underpin our entire economy as the second largest job creator. Over the last six years we passed two energy bills, a WRDA bill over a presidential veto, and a farm bill over two vetoes. We successfully fought for disaster assistance and against budget cuts to the safety net. And we worked to hold the line on regulations and reduce taxes. Working together, we will build on these accomplishments which we can all be proud of.

The Bush economic plan has put Minnesota into a deep hole — and it's time to stop digging. I've proposed common-sense solutions to help Minnesotans care for their kids and aging loved ones, balance work and family, and save for retirement. I call it "Kitchen Table Tax Relief," a set of middle-class tax credits designed to ease the burden on families caring for children or elderly loved ones. I'd be honored to go to Washington on your behalf, to partner with Sen. Klobuchar to stand up for rural Minnesotans.