

A FARM BILL FOR A THRIVING FUTURE FOR US ALL



ENSURING THE SURVIVAL OF ECOSYSTEMS AND OUR PLANET

In the face of a changing climate, producers must be supported to build resilience and mitigate the burdens of increasing weather extremes. Providing producers with technical and financial assistance to implement best practices that adapt to climate change should be prioritized in the 2023 Farm Bill. This must include investing in organic, agroecological, and regenerative systems, including those grounded in traditional and cultural knowledge and practices, and rejecting false solutions that enable harmful agricultural practices that degrade natural systems.

Reform Conservation Programs

Incentives that support implementation of practices that improve habitat, water and air quality provide lasting benefits to the environment. These should be expanded to build healthy soil, mitigate climate disasters, and increase access to programs. To achieve this Congress should:

- Strengthen and increase funding for USDA conservation programs, with prioritization for BIPOC producers.
 - Increase set-asides for BIPOC farmers in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
 - Disqualify subsidies to CAFOs through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and EQIP.
 - Increase the transparency and simplicity of program applications.
- Expand and improve the Conservation Stewardship Program.
 - Ensure that climate adaptation and mitigation are central to CSP by including them within the definition of conservation activities.
 - Support perennial production systems with supplemental payment rates.
 - Update application criteria to include improvements to soil health, increases to long-term carbon sequestration, and reductions to greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Add new programs that include a Traditional Ecological Knowledge section of Title II; soil health plans for conservation compliance; nationwide sodsaver grassland protection; and Conservation Program Navigators to serve BIPOC producers.
- Expand and improve the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
 - Add greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction and carbon sequestration as EQIP purposes and to the list of conservation activity plans; and make these activities eligible for higher payment rates.
 - Split the High Tunnel Initiative from EQIP to become a stand-alone program.
 - Incentivize pasture-based production methods and advanced grazing management.
- Require that the Risk Management Agency (RMA) recognize any conservation practices supported by NRCS as “Good Farming Practices” without requirements for zero yield impact.
- Ensure that 100 percent of the conservation funding included in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is maintained in the farm bill.

Increase Funding For Organic, Ecological, and Regenerative Agriculture

- Recognize regenerative, agroecological, and traditional Indigenous practices as contributing to healthy soils, water conservation, and climate resilience and support BIPOC producers using these practices.
- Expand flexible, comprehensive technical and financial assistance for producers transitioning to diversified organic, regenerative, and agroecological production, including a reduction of barriers to achieving and maintaining organic certification.
- Invest in systems-based research, technical assistance, and financial incentives to enable producers to implement practices that make their farms, animals and workers better able to withstand extreme weather.
- Increase funding for research and extension programs focused on organic, regenerative, and agroecological production, as well as transdisciplinary research at the nexus of food production, nutrition, and climate and the environment with a focus on equity.
- Provide increased funding for soil health and soil remediation research.
- Provide increased funding for urban agriculture infrastructure, and strengthen USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.
- Provide a voluntary buyout or other equitable option for farmers who want to transition away from industrial livestock and poultry systems.

Protect Ecosystems and Mitigate Climate Change

Federal policy must provide tangible climate-based solutions that support the economic and environmental well-being of farmers and workers. Congress should ensure federal programs:

- Protect water, soil, workers, and surrounding communities from contaminated agricultural run-off, including land-based aquaculture run-off and pesticide drift.
 - Penalize violators by ending federal contracts, insurance, and subsidies.
 - Enforce and expand pollution standards, and require annual reporting of the results of those enforcement activities.
 - Incentivize reductions in chemical pesticide and fertilizer use, and create buffer zones around agricultural fields to protect farmworkers from drift and run-off.
- Protect urban and suburban land from development by supporting agricultural trusts prioritizing BIPOC producers' access to land.
- Increase subsidies for closed-loop farming systems and inputs.
- Enact policies prescribed in the Agricultural Resilience Act, including those to increase carbon sequestration and technical assistance for climate-friendly practices.
- Reject false solutions that continue to support the industrialization of agriculture:
 - Reject carbon or pollution trading schemes, including carbon capture, carbon offsetting, and federal support for biodigesters.
 - Avoid any subsidies for the development or implementation of precision agriculture technologies.
 - End the prioritization of commodity crops over specialized crops.

The HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance is a national multi-sector, multi-racial coalition. HEAL is led by its member-organizations, who represent about two million rural and urban farmers, ranchers, fishers, farm and food chain workers, Indigenous groups, scientists, public health advocates, and community organizers united in their commitment to transformed food systems.