

NOFA's 2023 Farm Bill Campaign

The 7 Northeast Organic Farming Association chapters have come together to identify our region's greatest farming and food system needs and policies that can address them. As the farm bill process unfolds, we will continue to collaborate and offer opportunities for you to inform and join in on our advocacy campaign.

[Principles & Policy Priorities](#)

[Marker Bills](#)

[Partners and Allies](#)

[Policy Priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill](#)

[Bills and Regulatory Changes We Oppose](#)

[Take action](#)

Principles

At this moment of multiple crises in our world - climate, insurgent white supremacy, inequality, pandemics, conflicts both military and political - we believe that there is an urgent need for a Farm Bill that is transformative, that will set in motion the transition from a system of farming and food that exploits land, people and livestock and is guided by profit and competition. These principles came together with input gathered during spring and summer 2022 farm bill listening sessions hosted by NOFA chapters and through careful evaluation of campaigns being developed by organizations that share our values and priorities.

We want a Farm Bill that...

1. Invests in and protects the integrity of organic and agroecological practices as a core solution to our climate and biological crises.

Organic practices improve soil health¹, promote biodiversity above and below ground, and require biological, mechanical, and cultural means of pest and disease control like cover crops and crop rotation. By actively working with natural systems and avoiding the use of synthetic fertilizers and toxic pesticides, organic and agroecological systems eliminate some of the most potent GHG emissions while sequestering carbon and protecting wildlife and their habitats. The Farm Bill must protect the integrity of the National Organic Program and invest a substantial proportion of its funding to support expansion of organic and agroecological systems to 30% of farmland by 2030.

2. Ensures fair treatment and just livelihoods for farmers and workers throughout the food and farming system.

Farming is essential work that, at its best, provides food for our communities while nourishing and protecting ecosystems and contributing to the creation of community wealth. At present however, much of federal policy works to extract wealth, labor, and knowledge from those working the land, to the detriment of farmers, workers, eaters, and the environment. We need a Farm Bill that reestablishes parity prices that are in balance with the rest of the economy through equitable and just supply management with mandatory participation in conservation measures. It is time to end “cheap food” funded by exploiting farmworkers and the land. The Farm Bill must ensure living wages, and dignified livelihoods for every worker throughout the food supply chain and end the exclusion of farmworkers from labor protections.

3. Invests in rural communities, increases fairness and resilience of local and regional supply chains and breaks up consolidation in agriculture.

To enable rural prosperity and increase local food system resilience, the farm bill should expand organic and regional food processing, distribution, and marketing infrastructure; invest in community leadership and cooperative ownership models; expand risk management opportunities and market access for small and medium-scale and diversified farms and ranches; and prioritize support for Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and new and beginning farmers and ranchers in all programming. For communities to thrive and build more just and vital regional food systems, more investment and support is also needed for affordable and accessible broadband, healthcare, housing, and renewable energy.

¹ [Soil Health](#) means soils that have the continuing capacity to function as a vital, living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. The benefits of healthy soil include: supporting the production of food, feed, fiber, and fuel; facilitating infiltration, storage and filtration of water and protecting water quality; enhanced nutrient-holding capacity and nutrient cycling; providing habitat for diverse soil organisms; enhanced resilience to drought, extreme precipitation events, temperature extremes, pests, diseases and other stresses; breaking down harmful chemicals; reducing agricultural impacts on, and mitigating the impact on agriculture of, global climate change; and sequestering carbon and net long-term greenhouse gas benefits.

The farm bill must also reverse the devastation to local economies caused by the hyper-consolidation of food and agribusiness industries by enforcing existing antitrust laws, limiting mergers, guaranteeing fair contracts, and increasing corporate accountability to frontline communities.

4. Centers racial justice across all programs and repairs past and ongoing racialized harm.

USDA has a demonstrated history of discriminating against farmers of color in lending and credit practices and program implementation. Taken in the context of a broader history of land theft, forced labor and other forms of disenfranchisement, USDA must actively work to support access to land, credit, and other resources for self-determination for farmers of color and other marginalized communities. In doing so, they must meaningfully engage with and be held accountable to BIPOC farmers and other stakeholders to develop programs and policies that support their needs on the ground.

5. Promotes food sovereignty for disadvantaged communities and ensures nutrition security for all.

It is time to shift the US food system to localized food sovereignty with access to farmland and farming resources for BIPOC, women, LGBTQ+, the young, under-resourced and farmers from other marginalized populations. The concept of food sovereignty recognizes access to healthy, nutrient-dense food as a human right and maintains that people should have the ability to be active participants and stakeholders in the food they grow, consume and sell. Just as biodiversity is essential to soil health, social diversity is essential to a healthy and thriving food system. As a matter of justice and public health, people from marginalized populations must be afforded equitable access to nutrient-dense food free of toxic pesticides, such as food grown by organic farms. Further, in order to confront the worsening effects of the climate crisis, we must empower locally-controlled and adaptive efforts for food solutions. Shifting the US food system to localized food sovereignty with access to farmland and farming resources for Indigenous Native American, Black and other farmers of color will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. To this end, Congress has the opportunity to use the Farm Bill to elevate the interests of all who eat food and the small-scale local producers which resilient communities depend upon, particularly through deeper investments in urban agriculture and cooperative land ownership. Also as a matter of climate resiliency, congress must also reinvest in public plant and animal breeding programs to provide farmers with regionally adapted seeds and breeds.

6. Eliminates the use of toxic substances on farmland and in our food system while supporting a just transition for farmers.

The use of xenobiotic materials by definition interrupt living systems and soil ecosystems which nourish plants and animals, including humans. It is time to end public policies that subsidize pollution, and to require the manufacturers of pesticides, herbicides and genetically modified organisms to pay to clean up the contamination from which they profit. The U.S. must adopt the precautionary principle in introducing new materials and products and carefully weigh the climate impact of fossil fuels and their derivatives, especially synthetic fertilizers. These policies are necessary to protect biodiversity, the health of farmworkers and farmers, wildlife, and all who eat farm products. A just transition must be provided for farmers who have been coerced into the chemical-GMO-CAFO treadmill with incentives to transition their operations to agroecological systems with localized markets.

Policy Priorities

Marker Bills

What is a "Marker Bill"?

Because the farm bill is such a huge piece of legislation with many, many programs and policies included, [marker bills](#) are used to signal specific policy proposals for parts of the larger farm bill but are typically not passed as stand-alone bills. Introducing marker bills allows members of Congress and advocates to build support for policy asks that may then be included in the larger farm bill package.

Marker Bills NOFA Supports

This is a list of introduced marker bills that align with our principles and policy priorities.

[Agriculture Resilience Act](#)

Establishes goal for agriculture to reach net zero by 2040, while investing in agricultural research, soil health, transition to pasture-based livestock, ensuring farmland preservation and viability, on-farm renewable energy, and reducing food waste. Show your support: [TELL CONGRESS TO HELP FARMERS AND RANCHERS COMBAT THE CLIMATE CRISIS!](#)

[Strengthening Local Processing Act](#)

A comprehensive plan to increase slaughter options for local livestock and poultry producers, assist smaller facilities as they adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, and help consumers access locally-raised meat and poultry. Show your support: [ASK YOUR](#)

[MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO CO-SPONSOR THE STRENGTHENING LOCAL PROCESSING ACT!](#)

[Farm to School Act](#)

Expands funding for and scope of USDA Farm to School Grant Program, while prioritizing grant proposals that engage beginning, veteran and socially disadvantaged farmers and serve high-need schools

[Justice for Black Farmers Act](#)

Enacts policies to end discrimination within the USDA, protect remaining Black farmers from losing their land, provide land grants to create a new generation of Black farmers and restore the land base that has been lost, and implement systemic reforms to help family farmers across the United States.

[Milk from Family Dairies Act](#)

The plan would pay dairy farmers a fair wage based on their costs of production – for huge taxpayer savings. It would incentivize family-scale dairy farms over megadairies and ensure a consistent supply of regional milk for processors and consumers.

[Food and Agribusiness Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act](#)

Places a moratorium on certain acquisitions between large agricultural and retail-related businesses and establishes a commission to study and make recommendations to address concentration in the U.S. food and agricultural economy.

[Food from Family Farms Act](#)

Sets price floors at fair levels above the cost of production; implements supply management to prevent oversupply; establishes grain reserves to protect eaters, industry, and livestock interests from price spikes during times of shortage; and enacts strong conservation measures that incentivize farmer participation.

Partners and Allies

Our campaign has been influenced and informed by the work of many others including:

- American Farmland Trust | [2023 Farm Bill Policy Platform](#)
- [Climate Justice Alliance](#)
- HEAL Food Alliance | [Platform for Real Food](#)
- Farm Action | [Fair Farm Bill Campaign](#)
- [National Family Farm Coalition](#)
- National Organic Coalition | [Farm Bill Legislation](#)
- [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#)

- National Young Farmers Coalition | [One Million Acres for the Future Campaign](#)
 - [Organic Farmers Association](#)
-

Take action

[Sign up for email alerts:](#)

we'll let you know when to take action and how to share input

[Share your farm bill](#)

[priorities](#) with the House Agriculture Committee tasked with drafting the bill

[Dig deeper into the farm](#)

bill with ***[this detailed webpage](#)*** from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

Share feedback on NOFA's principles and priorities: email us at info@nofanh.org.