



Farm Action Fund



Farm Action

FOOD, NOT FEED

How can the farm bill improve competition in the U.S. economy?

In our concentrated food and farm system, the top four firms in nearly every sector have acquired abusive levels of power.

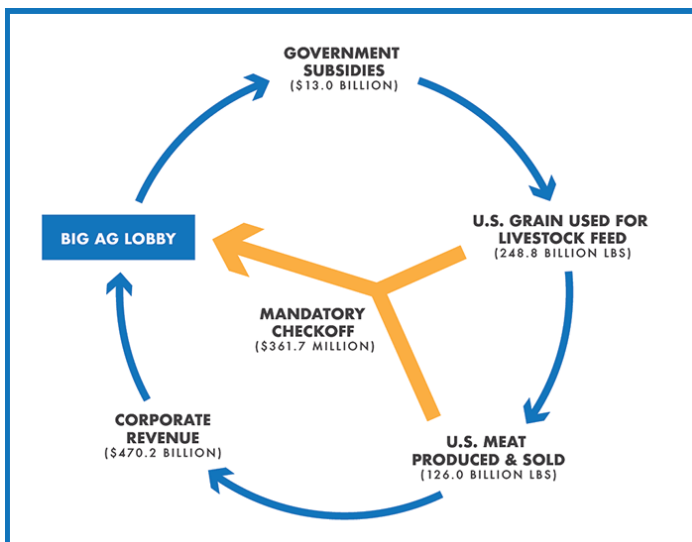
This year's farm bill is an opportunity to restructure our system so that it empowers farmers to grow nutritious food for their communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PRO-COMPETITION FARM BILL

Consolidation in our food and agriculture system has reached a point where the top four firms in nearly every sector have acquired abusive levels of power. This level of control allows them to reap record profits while paying lower prices to the farmers who produce our food, externalizing the harms of their extractive practices on our most vulnerable neighbors, and charging higher prices to consumers.

Control over their industries gives them undue influence on our policy making process. Past farm bills have allowed monopolists to further entrench corporate control over every level of our food supply chain by dictating which practices are subsidized and which are effectively penalized. Now, a handful of corporations ultimately control who farms, how they farm, and who gets to eat.

THE FEED-MEAT COMPLEX



One such mechanism is the Feed-Meat Complex, in which subsidies for monocropped feed grains yield a surplus of cheap feed for industrial poultry and livestock raised in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). CAFOs are large operations that pollute the air and water, degrading the quality of life in the communities in which they operate.

The Feed-Meat Complex has emboldened and enriched corporations, whose influence over past farm bills has relegated farmers to mere cogs in a system that lines corporate pockets.

We have a real opportunity in this year's farm bill to disrupt the Feed-Meat Complex and restructure our food and farming system in a way that empowers farmers to grow nutritious food for their communities. Over time, this shift will result in a resilient food system that prioritizes regenerative production models and food sovereignty over corporate-controlled supplier and buyer markets.



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DISMANTLING THE POWER OF CORPORATE AGRIBUSINESS

LIMIT MEGACORPORATE SUBSIDIES

- ✓ Set payment limits on risk management and commodity programs and limit attempts to weaken payment limits by strengthening the definition of “actively engaged” (Marker Text: Sections 1704 and 1705 from Senate version of 2018 Farm Bill).
- ✓ Implement payment limits on insurance premium subsidies and limit or restrict access to subsidy premiums for farms with an adjusted gross income above \$750,000, or \$1,500,000 for married persons.

ROLL BACK AGRIBUSINESS CONTROL

- ✓ Ensure checkoff programs are transparent and accountable by requiring their budgets and disbursements to be published and periodically audited, and by restricting their engagement with lobbying organizations that have conflicts of interest or that conduct anticompetitive activities (Marker Bill: Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act).
- ✓ Enact robust Right to Repair and agriculture data protections to give farmers and owners of farm equipment control over their businesses.

END INDUSTRIAL ANIMAL AGRICULTURE’S STRANGLEHOLD ON OUR FOOD SYSTEM

- ✓ Eliminate provision mandating that 50% of Environmental Quality Incentive Program funding be set aside for livestock (Marker Bill: EQIP Improvement Act of 2023).
- ✓ Place an immediate moratorium on new large CAFOs and phase out the largest existing CAFOs by 2040 (Marker Bill: Farm System Reform Act).
- ✓ Institute Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (American Beef Labeling Act).
- ✓ Establish an Office of Special Investigator for meatpacking (Meat and Poultry Special Investigator Act).
- ✓ Strengthen the Packers and Stockyards Act so that it has the power to protect livestock and poultry producers from anticompetitive practices as originally intended.

BREAK UP BIG AG

- ✓ Begin the process of reviewing the largest mega-mergers of the past two decades (Marker Bills: Prohibiting Anticompetitive Mergers Act of 2022; Food and Agribusiness Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act)
- ✓ Enact robust Right to Repair and agriculture data protections to give farmers and owners of farm equipment control over their businesses.



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BUILDING ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSUMERS

INVEST IN NUTRITIOUS FOOD

- ✓ Expand crop insurance options by strengthening the recent changes RMA has made to Micro Farm and Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) Program.
- ✓ Significantly increase funding for Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).
- ✓ Authorize and fund recent USDA programs, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), that lift up and support local and regional food production systems. These programs include Regional Food Business Centers Program; Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program; Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA); Local Local Foods for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS); Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC); Organic Transition Initiative; Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program; Heirs Property Relending Program (HPRP); and Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Grants (UAIP).

SUPPORT OUR FARMERS

- ✓ Increase funding to grant programs, like the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. (SARE) program, with a focus on assisting farmers transitioning to organic and/or regenerative food production models (Marker Bills: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act of 2017; Justice for Black Farmers Act).
- ✓ Adjust commodity price support programs to ensure a safety net for those who transition to organic production.
- ✓ Increase funding for the Local Agricultural Marketing program (LAMP).

PROCURE LOCAL FOODS

- ✓ Require USDA to establish purchasing targets or set-asides for purchases of foods from independent regional producers, foods from socially-disadvantaged producers, and foods from organic/regenerative farms.
- ✓ Implement a “Box Program” to get nutritious food directly to consumers and support independent farmers and local food systems.



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FOSTER CLIMATE-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

ADDRESS EXTERNALIZED COSTS OF INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE

- ✓ Hold corporate integrators responsible for pollution and other harmful effects of CAFOs. (Marker Bills: Farm System Reform Act; Industrial Animal Agriculture Act).
- ✓ Provide a voluntary buyout for farmers who want to stop producing livestock or poultry according to CAFO methods. (Marker Bills: Farm System Reform Act; Agriculture Resilience Act)

INCENTIVIZE REGENERATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE FARMING PRACTICES

- ✓ Require farmers to meet certain conservation standards in order to participate in federal crop insurance, commodity/price support, and disaster payment programs (Marker Bills: Agriculture Resilience Act; Food and Farm Act).
- ✓ Promote conservation farming practices through risk management programs by incentivizing natural resource stewardship and removing barriers to adoption of conservation practices (Marker Bill: COVER Act).

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:
[FARMACTION.US/FAIR-FARM-BILL](https://farmaction.us/fair-farm-bill)

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

COMMODITY CHECKOFF PROGRAMS

The checkoff is a once voluntary, now mandatory, fee that many U.S. farmers, ranchers, and producers pay every time they sell any of 21 commodities, including corn, soybeans, beef, and pork. Today, these programs now funnel billions of dollars back into the pockets of commodity trade groups and lobbying organizations that force producers to either get on board with monopolists or get out of the business altogether.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

Run by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the CRP sets up long-term contracts to take sensitive lands out of production. There is still controversy around the approach of land retirement and if, or at what levels, taking land out of production impacts land values, crop prices, or input markets. This debate always heats up when crop prices are high.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)

Run by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Farms can enroll in this long-term conservation management program. CSP is often described as a “working lands” program because it does not take land out of production, but rather pays farmers to use specific practices that benefit the environment. Along with EQIP, this program commands most of the conservation funding within the farm bill.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

Run by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). It provides financial and technical assistance to farmers who address environmental and natural resource concerns. Importantly, a great deal of EQIP dollars wind up funding methane digesters at CAFOs, propping up megacorporations.

LOCAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING PROGRAM (LAMP)

Umbrella program created in the 2018 Farm Bill that provides permanent funding and improvements for the following three programs.

> Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program provides competitive grant funding to projects that market directly to consumers and to local and regional food businesses that aggregate, process, and distribute products to meet market demand.

> Regional Partnership Program provides competitive grant funding to form multi-stakeholder partnerships and encourage “food-shed” approaches to planning and developing local and regional food economies.

> Value-Added Producer Grant Program is a competitive grants program that provides business planning and working capital grants to farmers, farm groups, and farm co-ops to develop value-added producer-owned businesses that provide high quality food products to consumers.

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

NIFA funds programs focused on advancing agriculture related science. Most importantly, NIFA administers funds through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), a popular program designed to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables in low-income communities.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM (SARE)

SARE is a competitive grant and education program that provides farmers, ranchers, researchers, and educators with funding to implement sustainable agricultural practices