



Farm Action Fund



Farm Action

# FOOD, NOT FEED

## How can the farm bill improve our national security?

Reliant on globalized supply chains, our current consolidated food system leaves Americans vulnerable to any disruption beyond our borders.

The farm bill offers a critical opportunity to strengthen our domestic food production, secure our farmland for actual farmers, and fortify our citizens with the nutrition they will need if they are called to defend our nation.

### U.S. FARM POLICIES ARE PUTTING THE NATION AT RISK

Food security is national security: in order to defend itself, a nation must be able to reliably produce and distribute nutritious food to its citizens. But here in the U.S., we are importing more food than we export and struggling with a public health crisis caused by poor nutrition. What's more, land access is increasingly out of reach for our own farmers and ranchers.

This is the result of the past four decades of U.S. farm policy, which prioritized exports of feed for industrial-controlled livestock over the production of healthy food for our citizens, and which enabled a foreign corporate takeover of our farmland. The farm bill must address these critical issues and create a healthier, safer America.



#### FEEDING THE WORLD? WE DON'T EVEN FEED OURSELVES.

The U.S. has always been a proud agricultural powerhouse, but for the first time in more than 50 years, our mighty farm system ran a trade deficit in 2019 — due to our dependence on imported Mexican fruits and vegetables. In early 2023, USDA predicted that fruit and vegetable imports will grow 2% annually, even as farm exports shrink by 12% over the next three years. When we rely on other countries for the food our citizens need, we're not only denying our own farmers opportunities to be profitable, we're also making ourselves vulnerable to any global catastrophe that might disrupt the supply chain.



#### A NATIONAL HEALTH CRISIS THREATENS MILITARY READINESS.

Currently, only 23% of our young people are physically fit to serve in the military, in large part because of poor diet and nutrition. Instead of supporting the production of healthy foods, our farm policies instead incentivize commodity crops like corn and soybeans. These are used to make cheap sugars, starches, and oils that end up in highly-processed junk foods. As a result, many of the leading causes of death and chronic illness in the United States — heart disease, cancer, and diabetes — are diet-related and preventable with regular access to healthy food. A 2021 Rockefeller report estimated that the human health impacts of our current food system cost \$1.1 trillion annually.



#### A FOREIGN CORPORATE TAKEOVER ENDANGERS U.S. FARMLAND.

Foreign investment in American farmland has almost doubled since 2010, and the trend shows no sign of slowing. Several of these investments, including some by foreign adversaries like China and Saudi Arabia, have raised serious concerns due to their placement near strategic and militarily significant locations. U.S. farmers and ranchers tend to pay local vendors for goods and services, hire members of their own community, and conserve natural resources. By contrast, corporations and foreign governments are more likely to outsource goods and services, use up all natural resources, deploy harmful agricultural practices that pollute the air, soil, and water, and direct all profits to their foreign shareholders. Foreign corporate ownership of U.S. farmland also leads to inflated land prices that shut young and beginning farmers out of the market.



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## How can the farm bill improve our national security?

Policy recommendations to support a Fair Farm Bill

For the sake of our health, wealth, and safety, we must create a Fair Farm Bill. These policy recommendations will allow us to invest in the farmers who grow and raise healthy food for their communities, build strong local and regional food systems that feed us in times of global uncertainty, secure our farmland for actual farmers, and improve access to nutritious food so that our people are prepared to defend their country.

## SECURING OUR NATION'S PRESENT AND FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM

### SUPPORT U.S. FARMERS AND RANCHERS

- ✓ Support USDA in finalizing their important rule reforming the voluntary "Product of USA" label.
- ✓ Pass the American Beef Labeling Act to restore mandatory country of origin labeling for beef products.
- ✓ Institute a ban on foreign farmland ownership to protect communities from extractive agricultural practices and to prevent foreign adversaries from impacting our domestic food supply.

### ROLL BACK AGRIBUSINESS CONTROL

- ✓ Enact Right to Repair and agriculture data protections, restoring farmers' right to repair their own equipment, control over their businesses, and protections against foreign nations' abuse of their data.
- ✓ Provide farmers with transparency into checkoff programs. Require checkoff budgets and disbursements to be published and periodically audited, and restrict their engagement with lobbying organizations. (Marker Bill: Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act)

### BOLSTER LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

- ✓ 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 to build secure, local food systems.
- ✓ Implement a "Box Program" to get nutritious food directly to consumers and support independent farmers and local food systems
- ✓ Authorize and fund recent USDA programs that support local and regional food production systems and American farmers. 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).



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### IMPROVING AMERICA'S HEALTH AND MILITARY READINESS

#### INCENTIVIZE THE PRODUCTION OF NUTRITIOUS FOOD

- ✓ Set payment limits on risk management and commodity programs and limit attempts to weaken payment limits by strengthening the definition of “actively engaged” in farming. (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 people.

#### INVEST IN BETTER NUTRITION FOR AMERICANS

- ✓ 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).
- ✓ 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).

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:  
FARMACTION.US/FAIR-FARM-BILL**