



# U.S. Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal Policy Goals

## OVERVIEW

The U.S. Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal national coalition views the Green New Deal not as a partisan political initiative, but as a framework for transformational policy reform, across all sectors of the U.S. food and farming system.

The coalition supports policy reforms that expand economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers whose practices and businesses:

- combat climate change by reducing emissions and drawing down and sequestering carbon
- contribute to a clean environment and restore natural habitats
- provide access to locally produced, contaminant-free, nutrient-dense food
- help build and support resilient local and regional food systems and economies
- provide safe working conditions and living wages for farm workers

The coalition is committed to working with Congress to ensure that farmers and ranchers have a seat at the table when it comes to defining and finalizing the specific policies and programs that will form the basis for achieving the goals outlined in the Green New Deal Resolution.

## GENERAL POLICY GOALS

### Fair Prices for Farmers/Ranchers

The coalition supports policy tools—similar to those under FDR’s New Deal—which are intended to keep surpluses low and prices high by paying farmers to cut back production of some crops, especially soil-degrading, fossil fuel-intensive crops, and/or by buying and storing excess production for future sale, when adverse weather or other conditions result in food/crop shortages. Policy examples include:

- parity pricing/price floors
- government-funded supply management programs

### Reward Farmers for Eco-Services and Hold Corporate Polluters Accountable

The coalition supports policies that reward farmers/ranchers for restoring soil health and natural habitats, mitigating water and air pollution and sequestering carbon by employing practices such as cover crops, no-till, rotational grazing, silvopasture and agroforestry that enhance the soil’s capacity to sequester excess carbon from the atmosphere and retain rainfall.

The coalition also supports policies that penalize corporate agribusiness polluters that degrade soil quality and strip the soil of its capacity to store carbon, and that release toxic chemicals and drugs, including synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and antibiotics, into the air and water.

### Break Up Corporate Agribusiness Monopolies/Level the Playing Field

The coalition supports enforcement and expansion of antitrust laws and other policies to prevent industry consolidation that allows large-scale corporations to manipulate markets and use high-paid lobbyists to influence Congress on everything from food safety regulations to international trade agreements in ways that benefit a few big corporations at the expense of consumers and independent farmers, and that leaves family farmers and ranchers with fewer choices, thinner profit margins, and less independence.

Examples of policies the coalition supports:

- a moratorium on new factory farms
- reinstatement of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) to provide basic protections for farmers

- reform of the agricultural subsidy system so that more money goes to small and medium-sized farmers
- enforcement of the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) laws so that the “Product of USA” label can be applied only to meat from livestock both raised and processed in the U.S.
- patent law reforms to prevent predatory lawsuits by big corporations intent on monopolizing the seed market
- a national right-to-repair law that give farmers the right to repair their own equipment and retain full rights over the machinery they buy

### **Support Transition to Organic Agroecological/Regenerative Practices**

The coalition supports policies and programs that fund technical assistance, equipment purchases, infrastructure installation and site remediation for farmers/ranchers who want to transition to regenerative production practices. Examples of such policies include:

- expansion of programs that help farmers make conservation improvements on their farms, including the Conservation Stewardship, Agricultural Conservation Easement and Regional Conservation programs
- expansion of the Conservation Reserve Program to help farmers transition to organic farming practices
- funding to help factory farm contract growers regain their independence and transition to climate-friendly, soil carbon-enhancing practices, including 100% grazing for herbivores as a goal, and pasture-based animal husbandry for poultry and pigs with animal feed grains produced in a regenerative, climate-friendly manner.

### **Support Beginning and Diverse Farmers/Ranchers**

The coalition supports policies to correct and repair the historic and ongoing racism and violence that has driven Native Americans, then African Americans, from their land and has blocked access to USDA and Farm Credit System resources. The coalition also supports policies to help beginning farmers, especially young people, women and people of color, secure land to farm and achieve and sustain financial success. Some policy/program examples include:

- transforming the civil rights offices at the USDA, as Justice for Black Farmers has recommended, into agencies that addresses discrimination rather than cover it up
- reparations for the dispossession of Native American and African American land
- no interest loans for beginning farmers and a land trust that buys land from retiring farmers and sets it aside for beginning farmers, with specific benchmarks for Native Americans, African Americans and other socially disadvantaged groups
- programs to help heirs' property owners retain access to their land and to USDA programs legal and technical assistance, through funding of the relending program, to help farmers hold onto their land expanded funding for the Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Loan Program and the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program, USDA programs that help tribal governments acquire land and preserve it for future generations
- incentives for community ownership of farmland
- expansion of Disadvantaged and Beginning Farmer State Coordinator program
- more funding for the Farmer Opportunity Training and Outreach program helps coordinate USDA training and education for beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers
- pathway to citizenship for migrant farmworkers and end exclusions for agricultural workers in labor laws
- reform H-2A agricultural work visas to substantially raise prevailing wages, allow workers to move between employers, increase enforcement and hold employers who mistreat workers accountable

## Strengthen and/or enforce USDA National Organic Program standards

The coalition supports enforcement of existing USDA National Organic Program regulations and standards in order to prevent large-scale farm operations from claiming organic without meeting the requirements, putting the smaller organic producers who do adhere to standards at an economic disadvantage in the marketplace. The coalition also supports strengthening existing organic standards rather than allowing large-scale producers to weaken and corrupt them. Examples of policies the coalition supports are:

- clarification, implementation and enforcement of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule
- require USDA organically certified produce to be grown in soil
- strengthen USDA import inspection, review, and testing protocols to ensure organic label integrity
- the Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act to implement enhanced procedures to track organic imports and ensure that imported products fully comply with U.S. organic standards
- require independent five-year sunset review by the NOSB to remain on the National List
- the PRIME ACT, which permits state-inspected meat to be sold within that state, thus eliminating the intrastate marketing barriers placed on livestock farmers by the requirement for USDA inspected livestock slaughter and processing facilities which are few and far between

## Support for Local/Regional Infrastructure

The coalition supports policies that allow farmers and ranchers access to local and regional supply chain infrastructure. Examples of such policies are:

- expansion of the USDA's Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) for local infrastructure-building projects
- investments in co-op grocery stores
- incentives for schools, hospitals, prisons and other institutions to procure locally produced foods. Institutional purchasing can be a huge boost to local producers and build local farm economies
- investments in local food processing facilities, including slaughter and dairy processing
- support for farmers to process their products on-farm
- state and local food sovereignty laws that exempt local food producers from state licensing and inspections governing food sales for transactions between the producers and the customers for home consumption or when the food is sold and consumed at community events such as church suppers

*Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal is a bipartisan national coalition of rural and urban farmers and ranchers, and organizations that represent farmers and ranchers. Coalition members share a commitment and work together to advance food and agriculture policies that support organic, regenerative, agroecological and biodynamic food production and land-management practices. **Learn more here:** <https://bit.ly/2mdHNnt>*

**Online version available here:** <https://bit.ly/2kJrRJe>