



LAND  
STEWARDSHIP  
PROJECT

*Keeping the Land  
& People Together*

- Lewiston, Minn.: 507-523-3366
- Montevideo, Minn.: 320-269-2105
- Minneapolis, Minn.: 612-722-6377

---

## Our Farm Bill 2018

Re-imagining U.S. Farm Policy that puts People,  
Communities & the Land First

Today there is a crisis facing rural communities. Our public policy in the federal Farm Bill is failing. Farmers are facing greater economic pressures while the majority of public money flows towards large landholders, insurance companies and corporate executives. This flow of public money speeds the consolidation of land, elevates an agriculture detached from the values of stewardship and community, and weakens rural life and culture.

While climate change leaves agriculture more vulnerable than ever, public policy pushes farmers to establish less diverse cropping systems on more marginal land. Contamination of our water increases, but public policy provides disincentives for utilizing farming approaches that protect our land and water. And while farm families are suffering, corporate agriculture continues to expand its reach with multi-national mergers, gaining more power and control over farmers' livelihoods and the use of the land.

*Our public policy and money, through the Farm Bill,  
is not working for the people, communities or the land.*

**Things need to change. We need the 2018 Farm Bill to be Our Farm Bill.**

### **Our Farm Bill**

- **Uses public resources for the public good.**
- **Values land stewardship and local, healthy food.**
- **Invests in people to build local communities vital for economic resilience.**
- **Rewards crop diversity and soil health as essential for our future.**
- **Upholds the interdependence of urban and rural communities.**

# Our Farm Bill Policy Priorities

Land Stewardship Project, January 2017

## Conservation

*Invest in working lands conservation programs that restore, maintain and enhance effective conservation.*

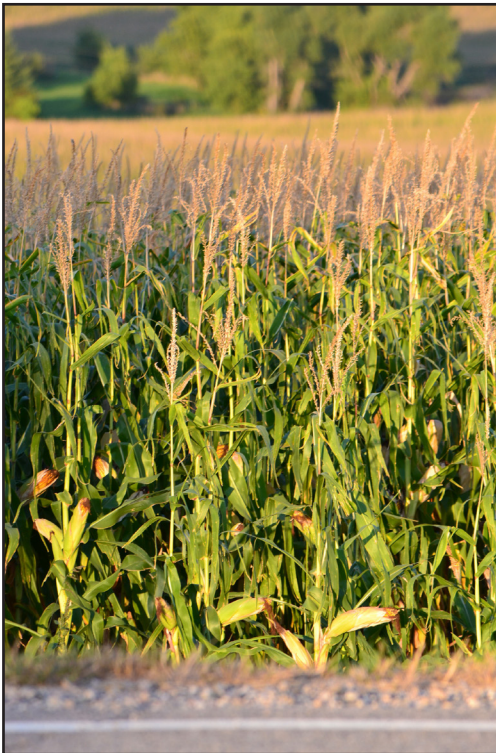
→ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** Fully restore and expand funding for the CSP. Value “existing” and “new” conservation practices equally. Stimulate lasting conservation outcomes with increased and meaningful payments to farmers committed to conservation practices that deliver the greatest environmental benefits.

→ **Soil Health Enhancement:** Increase incentives and support for crop and livestock systems that build soil health.

→ **Payment Limits on CSP:** Increase CSP program access to more farmers by closing loopholes to enforce the \$40,000 annual contract payment limit.

## Risk Management Reform

*Promote farm diversity as an important component of a Whole Farm Risk Strategy.*



→ **Premium Subsidies and Conservation:** Reward diverse crop rotations of three or more crops that include a resource conserving crop, as well as adoption or continuance of approved conservation practices that conserve soil, protect water and improve soil health, with a corresponding increase in premium subsidy support. Require adoption of approved conservation plans for all acres receiving public subsidies via the crop insurance program.

→ **Good Farming Practices:** Enable farmer innovators using NRCS approved cover crop practices to access crop insurance without risk of losing coverage. Categorize all NRCS approved practices as “Good Farming Practices.”

→ **Whole Farm Revenue:** Improve, simplify and promote the Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) program. Provide fair compensation for crop insurance agents to sell this policy and remove existing disincentives.

→ **Cut Spending:** Identify and cut wasteful crop insurance spending. Redirect these public funds to support conservation, beginning farmers and rural communities. Establish limits on the amount of insurance premium subsidies that can be received, in line with limits for other USDA programs. Renegotiate the Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA) to obtain a fairer deal for this substantial public investment.

## Next Generation of Farmers

*Support and invest in our next generation of farmers and leaders looking to enter the profession. Nearly 100 million acres are set to transition ownership over the next 5 years.*

→ **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP):** Increase funding for the BFRDP by \$50 million. Maintain priority funding for community-based organizations.

→ **Loan Access:** Reform the Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan process to enable beginning farmers to respond quickly to land sale opportunities.

→ **Individual Development Accounts (IDA's):** Approve funding for the implementation of IDA's for beginning farmers.

→ **Loan Forgiveness:** Support adding farmers to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program in the Higher Education Act. Good farming IS a public service.



## Local Economies

*Support beginning farmers and local economies that are meeting the growing demand for healthy, locally grown food.*

→ **Farm-to-Food Bank/Farm-to-Institution:** Create a new competitive grants program that would provide funds to emergency food organizations and similar entities/programs to procure fresh produce directly from farmers, authorized at \$5 million per year in mandatory funding.

→ **Farm-to-School/Institutions:** Expand and fund effective pilot programs that serve to establish and strengthen local farm-to-institution market chains.



## Corporate Concentration in the Ag & Livestock Sectors

*Identify and cut public investment that further strengthens corporate control and the consolidation occurring in our agricultural economy.*

→ **Ag Mergers:** Apply and enforce antitrust law via the USDA and the U.S. Department of Justice to regulate agricultural consolidations that extract wealth from rural economies.

→ **EQIP Funding:** Disqualify factory farms from receiving Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts, or significantly lower caps on EQIP contracts for corporate-controlled CAFO operations.

→ **Guaranteed Loans:** Disqualify factory farms from receiving federally guaranteed loans through USDA. Remove exemption that disallows Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests on federal guaranteed loans.

# Who We Are & Why “Our” Farm Bill

The Land Stewardship Project (LSP) is a nonprofit membership organization of over 4,000 households committed to building strong communities and to advancing innovative farming approaches that protect and conserve our land and water while working for economic, racial and social justice. We celebrate and elevate farmers, rural and urban, who clearly see the connection between farming and the health of people and the land.

We know that there are powerful interests that benefit from current agriculture policy as it is. Large multi-national corporate agribusinesses increase their profits at the expense of farmers, the land and communities. Insurance executives, factory farm owners and mega-land holders enrich themselves with the help of generous public subsidies given to their operations.

We, as the Land Stewardship Project, are working for a Farm Bill that is “ours.” We want a Farm Bill that works for everyday people, family farmers and the land. We believe our public officials should listen carefully, and put people, communities and the land first by passing **Our Farm Bill**.

We believe the polices outlined on the preceding pages advance a vision of a Farm Bill that is “ours.” They have been identified by LSP members as polices that invest public money in supporting family farmers, communities and the land. The LSP Federal Policy Steering Committee, which is made up of farmers, has played a leadership role in choosing these proposals, writing this document and organizing members to advocate to make this Our Farm Bill.

## LSP Federal Policy Steering Committee Members:

- Betsy Allister, Northfield Minn.
- Darwyn Bach, Boyd Minn.
- Bill Gorman, Goodhue Minn.
- Jon Jovaag, Austin Minn.
- Lauren Langworthy, Wheeler, Wis.
- Darrell Mosel, Gaylord, Minn.
- Eric Sannerud, Ham Lake, Minn.
- Paul Sobocinski, Wabasso Minn.,



• Ben Anderson  
LSP Federal Policy Organizer  
banderson@landstewardshipproject.org  
612-400-6352

• Tom Nuessmeier  
LSP Federal Policy Organizer  
tomn@landstewardshipproject.org  
507-995-3541



LAND  
STEWARDSHIP  
PROJECT

[www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org)