

Land Stewardship Project

OUR FARM BILL

-campaign-

A Farm Bill for the People & the Land



Why Our Farm Bill:

Farm Bills have been working against family farmers and rural communities. While farmers are facing greater economic pressures, federal policy has favored a system of agriculture that leads to land consolidation, less diverse cropping systems, more corporate power and weaker rural communities.

We, as the Land Stewardship Project, are working for a Farm Bill that works for everyday people, family farmers and the land. We believe the policies outlined advance a vision of a Farm Bill that is for the people and the land. They have been identified by LSP members as policies that invest public money in supporting family farmers, communities and the land.

Our Farm Bill Should:

- Use public resources for the public good.
- Value land stewardship and local, healthy food.
- Invest in people to build local communities vital for economic resilience.
- Reward crop diversity and soil health as essential for our future.
- Uphold the interdependence of urban and rural communities.

Five Policy Priorities of Our Farm Bill

1. 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.

2. 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.

→ **Reasonable Limits:** Create premium subsidy limits in line with other USDA programs to focus the program on being a safety net for family farmers. Presently the largest farms take in the vast majority of subsidies. Renegotiate the Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA) to make a fairer deal for our public investment and stop the large sums of public money overly rewarding private insurance companies.



3. 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):** Secure permanent funding for BFRDP, increasing yearly funding to \$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.



4. 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.

5. Corporate Concentration in Ag & Livestock

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

→ **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.

→ **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.



Who is the Land Stewardship Project?

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. These policies have been selected by the LSP member farmers on the Federal Policy Steering Committee after listening to the needs of LSP members.

LSP Member Farmers on the Federal Policy Steering Committee

• 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.,

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