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2018 Farm Bill Priorities

Rooted in our belief in **Good, Clean, and Fair Food for All**, Slow Food USA calls for a **2018 Farm Bill** that ensures the right of everyone to enjoy ample, sustainably and humanely produced food that is good for human health and well-being, protects our planet and replenishes our resources, and provides a decent living for those who work to put food on our tables.

A **top priority** for Slow Food USA – and many other food, farm, and nutrition advocates – is a **comprehensive Farm Bill** including both agriculture and nutrition programs. In nearly a century of Farm Bills, the common-sense pairing of nutrition and agriculture has served well both urban and rural constituencies, based on our elemental commonality – the food we eat.

Additionally, after years of budget cutting, we call on Congress to **preserve overall Farm Bill funding, restore conservation funding,** and, of critical importance, **preserve anti-hunger funding and programs.**

More specifically, we call for the 2018 Farm Bill to support; **Better Nutrition and an End to Hunger, A Level “Plowing” Field, and Food for the Future.** Cross-cutting these priorities is the imperative of advancing **racial equity throughout the food chain.**

1. Better Nutrition and an End to Hunger

Ensure that all, and most importantly our children, have knowledge about and access to ample, healthful food by preserving and enhancing the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP, formerly food stamps) and **The Emergency Food Assistance Program** (TEFAP); enhancing the funding and effectiveness of **Farm to School programming;** enhancing **Hunger and Food Insecurity Programs,** and promoting **food waste reduction.**

2. A Level “Plowing” Field

Ensure **vital support** of those who work to produce our food.

- **Small and Mid-scale, Family Farmers and Ranchers**
Provide equitable access to effective technical assistance, grants, risk management tools, credit programs, fair markets, and guest farm labor, with focus on diversified and sustainable farming and beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers.
- **Immigrant Farm Workers**
Protect immigrant farm workers from unfair treatment and fear of harassment, detention, family separation, and deportation.
- **Urban Farmers**
Address the unique needs of urban farmers by coordinating policies and providing technical and financial assistance.

3. Food for the Future

Meet the challenges of increasing population, imperiled agricultural resources, and climate change by; facilitating **transition to the next generation of farm ownership and operation,** focusing on

opportunities for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers; supporting and expanding **conventional plant and animal breeding** research and development; scaling up **conservation and stewardship programs**; and focusing **rural renewable energy programs** on solar, wind, and perennial-based biofuels.

We are pleased to support these **congressional marker bills**, pointing the way to the next Farm Bill.

- **Farm to School Act of 2017** ([S. 1767/H.R. 3687](#)) that would continue and expand the effectiveness of the **Farm to School Grant Program**, sponsored by Sens. Leahy (VT) and Cochran (MS) and Rep. Fortenberry (NE),
- **Local FARMS Act of 2017** (Local Food and Regional Market Supply Act of 2017 - [S. 1947/H.R. 3941](#)), that would help grow **vibrant local and regional food economies**, sponsored by Sen. Brown (OH) and Reps. Pingree (ME), Fortenberry (NE), and Maloney (NY),
- **Urban Agriculture Production Act of 2017** ([H.R. 3699](#)) that would promote and enhance **urban agriculture**, focusing on **historically undeserved neighborhoods**, sponsored by Rep. Kaptur (OH).
- **Young and Beginning Farmers Act of 2017** ([H.R. 4201](#)) that would make **young farmers** a priority by addressing: **affordable farmland, Farm Bill program access, and training, mentorship, and business development**, sponsored by Reps. Maloney (NY) and Costello (PA).
- **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act of 2017** ([H.R. 4316](#)) that would help the next generation of **new farmers** by improving **land-link programs** and protecting **farmland affordability**, securing **training funding**, expanding **farm succession support**, allowing federal **farm real estate loans** to reflect regional farmland inflation rates, expanding **risk management options**, and encouraging **conservation**, sponsored by Reps. Walz (MN) and Fortenberry (NE).

Our detailed 2018 Farm Bill priorities are here.

2018 Detailed Farm Bill Priorities

These **Slow Food USA 2018 Farm Bill Priorities** are rooted in our belief in a Food Chain that is Good, Clean, and Fair for All and inspired by the work of like-minded and allied organizations. *

In the 2018 Farm Bill, we support **Better Nutrition and an End to Hunger, A Level “Plowing” Field, and Food for the Future**. Cross-cutting these priorities is the imperative of **advancing racial equity throughout the farm and food chain**.

1. Better Nutrition and an End to Hunger, ensuring that all, and most importantly our children, have knowledge about and access to ample, healthful food.

- **1.1 Protect SNAP** from policy proposals to alter its structure and cut its funding and enhance its effectiveness by
 - **1.1.1** basing benefits on the USDA **“low-cost” food plan**, rather than the present “thrifty” food plan thereby, for example, increasing the weekly per child food budget from \$21, under the thrifty plan, to \$28.80, under the low-cost plan.
- **1.2 Protect and enhance TEFAP** (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) by
 - **1.2.1** providing additional **food purchase funding**,
 - **1.2.2** maintaining **storage and infrastructure funding**, and
 - **1.2.3** providing new infrastructure improvement grants to enable programs to develop capacity to procure and distribute fresh, **local and regional farm produce**.
- **1.3 Enhance and expand Farm to School programming** reach and effectiveness by

- **1.3.1** increasing the **program grant budget**, from \$5 million to \$15 million, to meet increasing school demand,
- **1.3.2** including **early education and summer feeding programs** and increasing access to farm-fresh and traditional foods among **tribal communities**,
- **1.3.3** improving program participation of **beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers**,
- **1.3.4** facilitating School Food Authorities' ability to purchase **locally produced food** by using local food production as a product procurement specification, and
- **1.3.5** facilitating **“scratch” cooking** of locally produced food in schools by loan guarantees and grants to finance infrastructure improvements in school lunch facilities and to train school cafeteria staff.
- **1.4 Enhance Hunger and Food Insecurity Programs** by
 - **1.4.1** reauthorizing the **CFP (Community Food Projects) Grant Program**, that promotes community-based food self-sufficiency and security in low-income communities, and providing \$10 million annually in mandatory funding and
 - **1.4.2** reauthorizing the **FINI (Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives) Program**, that provides competitive grants in support of fruit and vegetable purchase incentives to SNAP participants, focusing on local and regional production, with annual mandatory funding, gradually increasing to \$50 million over five years, and enhancing program effectiveness by providing for technical assistance and best practices sharing among grantees.
- **1.5 Support enhanced food waste reduction** by
 - **1.5.1** elevating and enhancing coordination of **food waste programs** to better measure and raise awareness about food waste and reduce it through education, incentives, and grants,
 - **1.5.2** increasing **donation of excess, nutritious food**, that would otherwise be wasted, by
 - increasing tax benefits to donating farmers and ranchers, other producers, and distributors,
 - clarifying and standardizing “sell, best, and use by” food labeling dates to help “destigmatize” donated, past-dated packaged food, and
 - providing grants and technical assistance to non-profit food distribution programs for planning and program development and distribution infrastructure enhancement,
 - **1.5.3** providing grant funding to support K-12 **school cafeteria food waste reduction** practices and the integration of food waste reduction into school curricula, and
 - **1.5.4** supporting a **national food waste education and awareness campaign** to address and help correct wasteful practices.

2. A Level “Plowing” Field, providing vital support of those who work to produce our food.

- **2.1 Small and Mid-scale, Family Farmers and Ranchers**, providing equitable access to effective technical assistance, grants, risk management, credit, fair markets, and labor, with focus on diversified and sustainable farms and beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers.
 - **2.1.1** Restore and increase funding and improve effectiveness of programs focusing on **beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and tribal communities** including
 - the Outreach and Assistance Program for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (the 2501 program), that addresses the challenges of African-American, American Indian, Asian-American, Latino, and veteran farmers,

- the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP), that supports tribal communities with youth development, agricultural and natural resource management, business development, and food security education and technical assistance, and
 - the Food Distribution on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) program, by providing greater tribal control, and
- target funding to **counties with persistent poverty** by waiving matching fund requirements for non-profit and community-based organizations administering Rural Development grant projects serving low-income populations,
- **2.1.2** Ensure equitable access to **farm credit**, focusing on beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers, by
 - expanding access to affordable farmland by increasing the maximum loan amount and adjusting the loan cap annually to reflect rising farmland costs,
 - amending the microloan statute to authorize Farm Service Agency (FSA), cooperative agreements with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) providing business, financial, marketing, and credit management services and technical assistance to microloan borrowers, and
 - coordinating the FSA borrower training program with the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) to ensure that financial management training programs prepare borrowers to meet FSA loan requirements.
 - **2.1.3** Reform the federal **Crop Insurance Program** to reduce taxpayer costs and use savings to ensure that the program is more efficient and effective by
 - ensuring equitable access to crop insurance, expanding program access to better serve all types of farmers on all types of farms of all sizes in all regions of our nation and improving delivery to make the program more transparent and efficient,
 - encouraging a heightened commitment to advanced conservation and stewardship and promoting conservation by eliminating insurance program barriers to sustainable farming practices and linking premium subsidies to stewardship practices that protect our land, water, and health, and
 - reforming the program's structure to prevent it from unfairly influencing markets, land access, or planting decisions and from promoting farm consolidation and weakening rural communities.
 - **2.1.4** Establish meaningful and effective per farm caps on **commodity and crop insurance subsidy program entitlements** and use savings to provide increased funding for innovative and effective programs supporting
 - beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers,
 - local and regional food markets,
 - organic agriculture and biodiversity, and
 - rural economic and community development.
 - **2.1.5** Empower **new farmers** with the **skills and resources** necessary to succeed in our changing agricultural economy by
 - clarifying and reinforcing the Value-Added Producer Grants Program (VAPG) priority and funding set-aside for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and
 - increasing Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program funding for grants and loans to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and other Micro-Development Organizations (MDOs).
 - **2.1.6** Reverse the trends of rapid **agricultural consolidation** and **vertical integration** and **foreign ownership of production, processing, and distribution resources** by

- amending the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA) to ensure that small and mid-scale producers do not face market place discrimination and do not have to prove market-wide anti-competitive injury to prove unfair or deceptive practices against them individually,
 - strengthening the Agricultural Fair Practices Act (AFPA) to ensure that processors do not engage in unlawful actions, including coercion and bargaining in bad faith, in dealings with individual producers or an association of producers,
 - implementing the Farmer Fair Practices Interim Final Rule on competitive injury,
 - implementing livestock market reforms to provide producers with pricing information and discourage packer price manipulation,
 - strengthening enforcement of anti-trust laws by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Justice (DoJ), sharing jurisdiction over food industry mergers, and
 - adding the Secretary of Agriculture to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.
 - **2.1.7 Establish vibrant local and regional farm-to-fork food chains** by
 - helping farmers reach new markets through outreach, cost-share, and technical assistance programs, including farm to consumer, institution, retailer and restaurant distribution,
 - increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food among low-income and historically underserved communities,
 - developing new and strengthening existing infrastructure that connects producers to consumers,
 - amending the Federal Meat Inspection act to expand the exemption of state custom slaughtering to include meat that is slaughtered and prepared in the state in accordance with state law and distributed to customers in the state,
 - revising the present SNAP Retail Food Store definition to enable Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations to accept SNAP payments, and
 - combining the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), adding low-income veterans' coverage, and providing increased mandatory funding for the combined program totaling \$50 million.
 - **2.1.8 Reform the federal H-2A (Temporary Agricultural Worker) Program** to better meet farmers' need for adequate farm labor by transferring the program, with necessary staff and financial resources, to the USDA, simplifying farmers' access to guest labor, and extending the program to dairy farmers.
- **2.2 Immigrant Farm Workers, protecting immigrant farm workers from unfair treatment and fear of harassment, detention, family separation, and deportation.**
 - **2.2.1** Provide H-2A guest farm workers, with good, established US agricultural work histories, with a **path to residency and citizenship**, for them, and their families.
 - **2.2.2** Retain present H-2A guest farm worker protections regarding **compensation, benefits, housing and meals, and transportation**.
 - **2.2.3** Ensure **equality of treatment**, including access to the courts and health care, eligibility for state minimum wages that exceed the H-2A wage, and state overtime wage provisions.
 - **2.2.4** Provide for guest farm worker **mobility**, enabling them to switch agricultural employers, and **flexible work stay duration**, up to three years.
 - **2.2.5** Extend the above provisions to **undocumented farm workers**, including dairy workers, with good, established US agricultural work histories.

2.3. Urban Farmers, addressing the unique **needs of urban farmers** through existing USDA programs by creating an urban agriculture office to coordinate policies and provide technical and financial assistance.

- **2.3.1** Provide **financial support** to help establish and support urban farms by
 - supporting rooftop and vertical farms with innovative conservation funding to help access urban production sites,
 - investing in research to develop markets and efficient energy and water consumption technologies,
 - expanding farm loan programs to finance food production, marketing, and value-added processing and including urban farm cooperatives in loan programs, and
 - investing in tools and equipment.
- **2.3.2** Provide **technical assistance** to enhance sustainable operation by
 - connecting urban farmers with mentoring rural farmers,
 - creating a pilot program providing sustainable growing practice assistance,
 - providing expanded technical and financial support for soil contamination testing and remediation, and
 - creating a pilot program providing composting assistance.
- **2.3.3** Develop **risk management tools**, considering unique risks, food prices, and contracts.

3. Food for the Future, meeting the challenges of increasing population, imperiled agricultural resources, and climate change.

- **3.1** Facilitate the **transition of farms** to the **next generation of ownership and operation**, focusing on opportunities for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers, through research, outreach, technical assistance, and financial support.
- **3.2** Support and expand **public conventional plant and animal breeding** research and development by
 - **3.2.1** expanding and accelerating seed options, giving farmers the **freedom to choose** what and how to grow,
 - **3.2.2** boosting investments in research to further **crop diversity** and enhance **food chain security**, and
 - **3.2.3** affirming farmers' and breeders' **right to share** and improve cultivars and breeds developed with public funds.
- **3.3.** Scale up farm **conservation and environmental stewardship** programs by
 - **3.3.1** restoring **Conservation Title funding**,
 - **3.3.2** increasing effectiveness and efficiency through better **measurement, evaluation, and reporting**,
 - **3.3.3** expanding **program access** to serve all types of farmers on all types of farms of all sizes in all regions of our nation,
 - **3.3.4** enhancing impact by **targeting funds** on the most effective conservation activities including pollinator restoration and greenhouse gas emissions reduction,
 - **3.3.5** improving support of **conservation outreach, planning, and implementation**, with focus on beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers,
 - **3.3.6** reducing funding for large **CAFO** (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) animal waste storage facilities and prohibiting funding for new and expanding large CAFOs, especially those new or expanding operations near impaired waterways or on floodplains, and
 - **3.3.7** elevating and enhancing coordination of programs to more effectively support **farm animal welfare** by
 - finalizing the rule for Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices, ensuring animal welfare in organic livestock and poultry operations,

- eliminating non-therapeutic antibiotic use in livestock and poultry production operations and restricting therapeutic uses of antibiotics deemed “critically important” to human medicine by the World Health Organization, and
 - researching and increasing access to animal welfare certification, emphasizing certification in research and extension programs, and creating a cost-share program to assist livestock and poultry producers and handlers in obtaining certifications.
- **3.4 Focus rural renewable energy programs** on solar, wind, and perennial-based biofuels by
 - **3.4.1** reinstating **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** grants to farmers and rural small businesses to conduct feasibility studies for energy efficiency projects,
 - **3.4.2** prohibiting REAP funding from subsidizing **ethanol blender pumps** at gas stations, and
 - **3.4.3** reforming the **Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)** to
 - limit funding for harvest, collection, storage, and transportation of biomass for off-farm energy purposes to ensure adequate biomass for sustainable farm operation and
 - encourage the transition from annual-based, corn and stover, ethanol production to perennial-based, grass and willow, ethanol production.

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- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), <http://sustainableagriculture.net/>,
- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), <http://frac.org/>,
- National Farm to School Network, <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>,
- National Young Farmers Coalition, <http://www.youngfarmers.org/>
- National Association of Farmer’s Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP), <http://www.nafmnp.org/>,
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), <https://www.nrdc.org/about>,
- Friends of the Earth, <https://foe.org/>,
- Cornell Farmworker Program, <https://cardi.cals.cornell.edu/programs/farmworker>,
- United Farm Workers (UFW), <http://ufw.org/>, and
- National Farm Worker Ministry, <http://ufw.org/>.