

Alliance Against Farm Bill Offsets

ActionAid USA - Agricultural commission - Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Friends Service Committee - Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake Counties Farmers Union (OH)
Athens County's Future Action Network- Beyond Pesticides - Biofuelwatch
Center for International Environmental Law - CleanAirNow - Climate Action California
Climate Critical - Coming Clean - CURE (Clean Up the River Environment) - CWA Local 1081
Deep Agroecology - Des Moines County Farmers and Neighbors for Optimal Health
Earth Ethics - Family Farm Defenders - Farmworker Advocacy Network - Food & Water Watch
Food for Maine's Future - Food in Neighborhoods Community Coalition
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice - Fridays for Future U.S. - Friends of the Earth
Good Rain Farm - Great Plains Action Society - Indigenous Environmental Network
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy - Karme Choling
Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition - Milwaukee Riverkeeper
National Family Farm Coalition - NC Council of Churches - NC Interfaith Power & Light
New Mexico Climate Justice - New Paltz Climate Action Coalition
NJ State Industrial Union Council - Organic Consumers Association - OrganicEye
People for a Healthy Environment - Pesticide Action Network
Physicians for Social Responsibility IA Chapter - Progressive Democrats of America
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility - Save Our Illinois Land
Seneca Lake Guardian, A Waterkeeper Alliance Affiliate - Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville
Taproot Earth - TIAA-Divest - Transformations CDC - Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Wall of Women - Waterspirit - World Animal Protection - Zero Hour - 350 Bay Area Action
350 Seattle - 350.org - 350Wenatchee.org

No Offsets in the Farm Bill 2023 Principles

Our organizations oppose offsets and carbon markets due to the adverse impact they have on Indigenous Peoples, farmers, rural and urban environmental justice communities, and our climate by promoting unsustainable agricultural practices, corporate and land consolidation, and dirty energy production. Decades of evidence suggest offsets are ineffective at mitigating the climate crisis and distract from real greenhouse gas emissions reductions. We will promote the vision of a Farm Bill that resists carbon markets and offsets as well as unsustainable agricultural practices and dirty energy, often promoted under the guise of climate smart agriculture.

Instead, this network will promote a Farm Bill that uplifts programs that respect the rights of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and farmworkers following the [Jemez Principles](#). In addition, we aim to further biodiverse, regenerative, sustainable agriculture and food systems, reduce fossil fuels and pesticides in farming practices, and promote a community-based food system that is

more resilient to climate change. The long-term vision is to reverse an unsustainable and consolidated agricultural industry that is susceptible to systemic supply shocks, and extracts wealth from rural communities. By following time-sensitive developments, including listening sessions, opportunities for public comment, and ways to influence lawmakers, the network will share information with wider networks and the public. This network seeks a Farm Bill in line with the values below:

What We Oppose

- Oppose any additions to the Farm Bill that would further the development of voluntary or compliance-based carbon markets including programs, regulations, initiatives, funding, or otherwise. The Farm Bill must **say no to carbon markets and offsets of any kind** including but not limited to soil offsets, forest offsets, and methane offsets. In addition, the Farm Bill should not include carbon capture and storage (CCS) or other forms of CCS including carbon dioxide pipeline build out and bioenergy for carbon capture and storage (BECCS).
 - **Soil offsets:** Sequestering carbon in soil is an impermanent solution to address climate change. Methods for measuring soil carbon sequestration remain underdeveloped, inconsistent, and unable to accurately account for differences in carbon storage related to specific climates and geographies. And carbon storage can easily be undone by land-use changes, plowing, and extreme weather events, which leaves soil offsets to perpetuate a myth that agriculture can sequester fossil carbon quickly and definitively.
 - **Forest offsets:** Forest offsets allow major polluters to mask true emissions reductions by claiming sequestration and biodiversity gains, and by claiming that forest protections prevent future deforestation. Indigenous Peoples' lands and forests, which are particularly rich in carbon and biodiversity, are increasingly coveted for their so-called ecosystem services. Forest carbon schemes cannot continue to commodify territories and allow polluters to continue business-as-usual unchecked.
 - **Methane offsets:** Carbon credits from methane produced in manure digesters are increasing in carbon markets. This is not "renewable natural gas" but a scam that furthers the consolidation of dairy and meat farms. This approach wrongly supposes that significant methane emissions from farms are inevitable, as well as ignores the litany of co-pollutants from farms poisoning the air and water of nearby environmental justice communities.
 - Carbon offset programs are incompatible with sustainable agriculture and may drive further consolidation of farms and agribusinesses.
- We oppose public funding for methane digesters, which perpetuates pollution and contamination and continues abuses in dairy and meat farms.
- We oppose USDA promotion of carbon markets. Congress must untangle what could be effective USDA conservation programs from promoting carbon credits sales and trade, as well as from the private sector influencing conservation.
 - Carbon offsets facilitated through conservation programs cannot be valued as a tradable commodity to boost corporate "net-zero" commitments or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- We oppose the overuse of pesticides. Reducing pesticides must be an imperative for rebuilding healthy soil, reducing toxic chemical run-off and improving water quality.

- Prohibit the use of toxic pesticides while earning funds from federal conservation programs (i.e. practicing so-called “no-till” while simultaneously using GMO seeds and applying harmful pesticides, such as glyphosate).
- We oppose farm policy of recent decades, which encouraged farmers to produce as much as possible and become price takers at harvest time.
 - Overly-abundant crops depress prices – sometimes to well below the cost of production. This inequity allows agribusiness companies to buy raw materials at far below cost, while farmers struggle to pay mounting bills.
 - Federal subsidies and crop insurance make up a small portion of the difference, but really those payments profit insurance companies and subsidize food conglomerates while still not providing the farmer with a living wage

While we hold many concerns around federal funding of, and support for, destructive farm programs that promote offsets, we believe the USDA and Farm Bill programs could have the necessary tools to build soil health, protect biodiversity, and build a justice-based food system -- all without the use of counter-productive carbon pricing systems including offsets. BIPOC, Tribes, communities, family farmers and ranchers need structural reforms and Farm Bill programs that ensure fair markets and prices, and infrastructure that supports a transition to an ecologically-based, sustainable continuance of regenerative farming. Rather than relying on offsets to lead the way to a healthier farm system, it is imperative that the 2023 Farm Bill:

What We Want

- Respect and uplift Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK) in regards to farming and ranching practices including with practices related to: agro-ecological growing practices, seed saving and exchange, fishing, ranching, gathering rights, and hunting.
- Respect and uphold the sovereign, inherent and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and Tribal nations.
- Broaden opportunities and support for BIPOC farmers and low-income communities to grow their own food.
- Invest in and improve existing conservation programs to help transition farmers to more ecologically-based agricultural practices and systems.
- Fund and support local and regional food hubs.
- Broaden opportunities for small and medium-sized farms to access crop insurance, increase safety net funding, promote Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and agro-ecological farming practices, and prevent large-scale monocrop production.
- Uphold intersecting human rights and biodiversity care and well-being.
- Emphasize the importance of building biodiverse, healthy soil.
- Ensure fair competition and treatment in the agriculture sector to ensure better living wages for all farmers and farmworkers.
- Decouple conservation programs from the private sector to directly serve the public good.
- Tighten and enforce antitrust laws to prevent further monopolization and consolidation of the food system.

Congress needs to transition away from false solutions to the climate crisis. Carbon trading and offsets are inherently flawed and allow fossil fuels to continue polluting. Therefore, related carbon trading corporate-backed schemes have no place in Farm Bill legislation. Over the coming months, the members of this network will meet every two weeks throughout 2023 to work on the issues outlined above.