



Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance

ENERGY

FARM BILL

POLICY PRIORITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 118TH CONGRESS



OPPORTUNITIES IN THE 2023 FARM BILL

U.S. farmers, ranchers, and forest owners are at the forefront of national efforts to address climate change. But we cannot do it alone. Further reducing emissions throughout the agricultural and forestry supply chain will require a comprehensive effort involving financial and technical assistance, research investments, proactive response to innovation, public-private partnerships, and a commitment to equitable opportunities for all producers.

With that in mind, FACA has developed a suite of policy recommendations for the upcoming farm bill that would help our sectors achieve our climate mitigation potential while preserving and creating new economic opportunities. These recommendations reflect FACA's guiding principles and fall into six categories, which include:

- **Conservation, Risk Management, and Credit**
- **Energy**
- **Food Waste**
- **Forestry**
- **Livestock and Dairy**
- **Research, Extension, and Innovation**

FACA recognizes the enormous importance of farm bill programs and supports critical investments in the farm safety net and disaster assistance, as well as for conservation, forestry, rural development, market access and research programs. These programs are all vital to sustaining rural livelihoods and protecting our nation's ability to produce the most abundant, affordable, and safe food supply in the world.

FACA's 23-member Steering Committee developed farm bill policy recommendations to advance voluntary bipartisan climate solutions. We urge both chambers of Congress and the President to act this year to pass this essential legislation, which impacts every family in America.

ABOUT FACA

The Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA) initially began as an informal dialogue between eight organizations discussing opportunities for the food, agriculture, and forestry sectors to help advance climate solutions across the supply chain. Since formally launching in 2020, FACA has grown into an 80+ member coalition.

Today, our broad membership represents farmers, ranchers, forest owners, agribusinesses, manufacturers, the food and innovation sector, state governments, higher education associations, sportsmen and sportswomen, and environmental advocates.

FACA has served as a resource to Members of Congress and Administration officials. Our past recommendations have been credited with shaping federal laws and programs.

FACA members are united in support of federal climate policies that:

1. **Are voluntary, market- and incentive-based;**
2. **Advance science-based outcomes;**
3. **Promote resilience and help rural economies better adapt to climate change;**
4. **Ensure equitable opportunities for all farmers, ranchers, and forest owners, including historically underserved and small producers; and**
5. **Are strongly bipartisan.**

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:





ENERGY

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that as much as 10 million acres of rural land could be needed to meet clean energy goals. The 2023 Farm Bill provides an opportunity to influence how and where this clean energy development takes place, including maximizing benefits and reducing risks for farmers and working lands.

FACA recommends robust funding of existing energy title programs that support critical infrastructure and clean energy investments in rural America, alongside incorporating policies that allow farmers to participate in the clean energy economy while maintaining and enhancing working lands.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1** Secure and maintain robust funding for Energy Title programs that support renewable energy and energy efficiency investments in rural America, most importantly, the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).
- 2** Increase USDA cost-share for REAP bundled renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.
- 3** Encourage USDA to develop a streamlined REAP application process for farmers and farmer-owned cooperatives meeting the program's small business size requirements.
- 4** Support Secretarial discretion to waive the small-business size limitation impacting farmer-owned cooperatives' eligibility in REAP.
 - A. FACA encourages the Secretary to consider these requests on a case-by-case basis. Granted waivers should facilitate small- and medium-sized producer participation in digester and renewable energy projects operated and financed by farmer-owned cooperatives.
 - B. The inclusion of cooperatives in REAP recognizes a different model for digesters, for example a community digester that pools several producers' waste or a cooperative that owns and maintains digesters on farms. This inclusion would not be limited to digesters, and similar models could be used for wind, solar, and/or efficiency projects.
- 5** Incentivize solar PV practices that support agricultural and renewable energy goals.
 - A. Direct USDA to engage with local stakeholders, including but not limited to farmers, ranchers, landowners, and energy providers, and work with State Rural Development Energy Coordinators and Rural Development State offices, State Departments of Agriculture, and Land-Grant Universities and/or Cooperative Extension Offices to provide technical assistance and cost-share for projects.
 - B. Specific projects to prioritize technical assistance and financial assistance should include:
 - I. Installation of dual-use solar PV designed with best practices for agricultural lands to achieve energy production and agricultural goals related but not limited to:
 - Agricultural considerations such as agrivoltaics, grazing, and raised panels,
 - Rural livelihood considerations such as public acceptance, community benefits, and landowner concerns, and
 - Environmental considerations such as pollinator habitat, native vegetation, soil health, wildlife habitat, and water quality and quantity.
 - II. Projects should discourage the loss of prime farmland and ensure that project acres maintain their use-value tax assessment of agricultural lands while enrolled in the program.

NOTE:

Recommendations are numbered for ease of organization and review. Numeric position does not indicate order of importance.