



Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance

FOOD WASTE

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:





FOOD WASTE

By some estimates, as much as 35 percent of the food grown and raised in the United States is “wasted” – i.e., goes unsold and uneaten by consumers. This number is particularly discouraging considering that USDA estimates that as many as 13 million households were food insecure at some time in 2021. More than 60 percent of food waste takes place on farms and ranches, manufacturing operations, and consumer-facing businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores. Addressing food waste in the supply chain has major benefits in terms of feeding Americans, creating new economic opportunities for businesses, and guaranteeing

that the environmental resources put towards growing and producing food are used as efficiently as possible.

The 2018 Farm Bill included language explicitly related to food waste for the very first time, including the creation of a food waste liaison at USDA. FACA recommends Congress look for ways to build on this progress by including food waste reduction as part of the larger reauthorization of U.S. agriculture and food programs and exploring opportunities to include this goal in existing USDA structures.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1 Make the position of USDA Food Waste Liaison permanent.

- A. In addition, provide Congressional support to the ongoing collaboration and shared responsibilities on food waste between USDA, FDA, and EPA.

2 Direct USDA to provide funding, outreach, and education to farmers and ranchers, consumers, manufacturers, restaurants, and grocery stores on opportunities to reduce food waste.

- A. Increase outreach and education on the new Food Donation Improvement Act, which expanded the scope of direct-to-consumer donations subject to liability protections under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act.
- B. Identify grant funding opportunities for the scale-up of technologies (such as dehydration, stabilization, an improvement of cold chain efficiency) for reducing loss and waste of foods while keeping products in the human food supply chain.

NOTE:

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

3 Expand prioritization of food waste education in existing nutrition education programs and build outreach for ongoing efforts.

- A. Broaden the distribution of USDA materials geared towards school and consumer education on food waste.
- B. Empower Cooperative Extension offices to further distribute USDA materials on food waste.

4 Allocate funds to support in-house and competitive programs to develop reusable, recyclable, and compostable packaging suitable for a diversity of foods sold through multiple channels.

- A. Innovation in packaging is critical for reducing food loss and waste, while maintaining shelf life, food safety, and visual appeal of foods.
- B. No efforts should be directed at limiting the use of technologies (such as functional stickers for fresh produce) that aim to reduce packaging waste while maintaining efficiencies of operations.

5 Conduct outreach on grants and other funding opportunities for food waste research – with a focus on opportunities to address field- and processing-level food waste – to reach new academic and research audiences.

- A. Expand outreach beyond traditional researchers to bring in innovative new thinkers who may be unfamiliar with opportunities at USDA. This would include leveraging existing grant programs administered by USDA that allow for food waste research and pilot programs including the Office of Rural Development (which has a food waste funding guide), the Agricultural Marketing Service, Food and Nutrition Service, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
- B. This could include expanding USDA's webpage devoted to these opportunities (<https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/funding>).

6 Ensure USDA considers a systems approach to food loss and waste and recognizes the role of plant breeding and biotechnology.

- C. Streamline regulatory approval for crops, including polyploids, developed using modern plant breeding technologies.
- D. Biotechnology is a critical tool in breeding to enhance the efficiency and efficacy of agriculture through improvements in genetics. Modern breeding tools offer breakthroughs for extending shelf life, enhancing quality, safety, and resilience as well as breeding for traits desirable by consumers.

