

AG MATTERS

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN for SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

www.sustainableagriculture.net

FALL/WINTER 2007

2007 Farm Bill Debate Heats Up

By Annette Higby, National Campaign

House Farm Bill

The House of Representatives passed its version of the 2007 Farm Bill in late July. Despite the Democratic leadership's directive to the House Agriculture Committee Chair, Colin Peterson, to bring a reform minded Farm Bill to the House Floor, The Farm, Nutrition and Bio-energy Act of 2007 is, in some respects, disappointing. It includes what can only be described as anemic payment limitation reform, virtually nothing to restore open and competitive livestock markets and it guts the sustainable agriculture community's flagship working lands conservation program.

Chairman Peterson's payment limit proposal does little to stop the staggering transfer of wealth to large farms producing cotton, rice, corn, wheat or soybeans and is expected to save just \$522 million over 10 years. Savings were achieved, however, by cutting \$4.8 billion from the Conservation Security Program and eliminating any new sign ups until the year 2012. So what's the good news?

The House Bill does include mandatory funding for organic certification cost share and it authorizes

(rather than mandates) a program to provide technical and financial assistance to farmers for organic conversion. It provides for implementation of Country of Origin Labeling by September 30, 2008 and retains the prohibition on the use of a mandatory National Animal Identification System as a means of establishing country of origin. It allows interstate sales of state inspected meat but only when the state standards are "identical" to the federal meat inspection requirements. It includes \$30 million in mandatory funding for the Value Added Producer Grant program with a 10% set aside for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and a priority for projects that increase opportunities to small and moderate sized farmers.

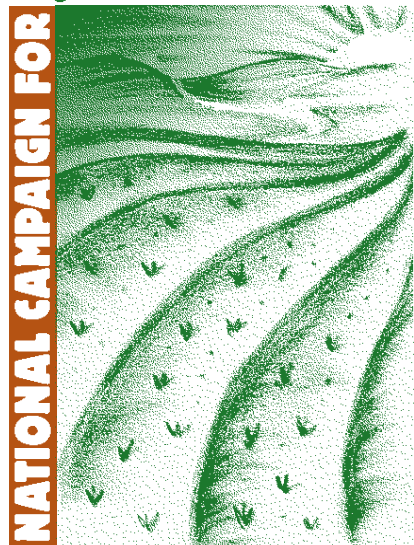
The House Bill gives the Farmers Market Promotion Program a new name—the Farmers Marketing Assistance Program—to reflect a broader set of goals and uses and provides mandatory funding at \$35 million over the 5-year life of the Farm Bill. The House Bill's energy title also creates a pilot program that would provide financial incentives to producers of cellulosic biomass to help fuel the development of advanced biofuel production facilities.

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SUSTAINABLE



AGRICULTURE

What Will Real Reform Look Like?

Once every five years a new Farm Bill offers the potential for broad change in U.S. policy on agriculture... but it's mighty hard to achieve it! While we are often limited to *small steps* when it comes to reform, the National Campaign also promotes open discussion of genuine ideals of agriculture policy that will bring just and healthy food systems, based on thriving farms, and strong rural communities. Below four Board members, and one close Partner, reflect on their ideals for reform on food security, diversity and social justice, conservation and renewable energy, and the commodity program.

Thomas Forster, Policy Director
Community Food Security Coalition

This is an historic Farm Bill. We are seeing a shift, with many diverse interests working together to build policy that breaks the traditional disconnect between the food side and the farm side of the Farm Bill. People in urban areas are asking for more than food security, they want CSAs, farm to school programs, and local farms kept alive in case of global climate change. Right now, food supply and reserves are managed to keep world prices low, with local farms everywhere frozen out of their own markets by price. A healthy food system would have carbon emission-friendly supply chains, with no squash traveling from two directions across the country or around the

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From the Executive Director's Desk...

Letter from the Executive Director

We have brought all our resources to bear to maximize public input and to work towards reform in this 2007 Farm Bill year. We also work daily to build the movement for the long haul, since effective policy change can only happen over time. Our diverse and dedicated base of partners and individuals from across the country believe that "policy development that results in food and agricultural systems and rural communities that are healthy, environmentally sound, profitable, and humane" is not only fundamental to creating a sustainable future, but possible!

The arrival of Annette Higby as Policy Advisory Committee Coordinator in April has been a high point this year. Her hard work and talent have allowed us to get to work on the Farm Bill quickly and effectively. She launched our new Advisory Committee, has done regular updates to the newly created alert list of Farm Bill Heroes, and has worked, in partnership, to organize a fly-in to Washington D.C. The fly-in met all its goals, bringing farmers from targeted states and districts into the halls and offices of Congress.

This edition of our newsletter reflects a fresh look for the National Campaign, building off the creation of an updated logo and tagline. We also have new stationery and our first organizational brochure. What's next? We expect to unveil by late October a new face and format for our website. Effective communication is critical to engaging and working with the grassroots across the country.

With fall harvest comes the season of thanksgiving and we have many people to give special thanks!! I want to single out Marché Restaurant and Jessica MacMurray-Blaine in Eugene, OR; Judy Wicks and the White Dog Café in Philadelphia, PA; Dan Barber of Blue Hill and Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, NY. Also, Jim Woolery and Cravath, Swaine & Moore; Tricia Cook; and a number of our partners, including Defenders of Wildlife, National Family Farm Coalition, the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Rural Coalition, and the Community Food Security Coalition. Finally, I am always thankful to our board, staff and consultants for the energy and dedication that gives the National Campaign its substance.

We have accomplished a great deal this year with the help of many: funders, partners, and of course all of you who support our work individually. Thank you! As we fast approach the end of 2007, I hope you will include us in your plans for giving, positioning us for even greater impact in 2008. Please contact me directly at any time with your interests and thoughts for our continued work.

Deborah M. Burd
Executive Director



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The NCSA is a diverse nationwide partnership of individuals and organizations cultivating grassroots efforts to engage in policy development processes that result in food and agricultural systems and rural communities that are healthy, environmentally sound, profitable, humane and just.

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*SAWG: Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Why the Farm Bill Matters

Excerpted with permission from Food Fight, by Dan Imhoff

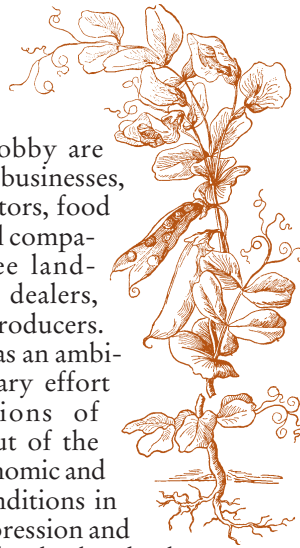
If you eat, pay taxes, care about the nutritional values of school lunches, worry about the plight of biodiversity or the loss of farmland and shrinking open space, you have a personal stake in the tens of billions of dollars annually committed to agricultural and food policies. If you're concerned about escalating federal budget deficits, the fate of family farmers, a food system dominated by corporations and commodities, conditions of immigrant farm workers, the state of the country's woodlands, persistent hunger and poverty, or the marginalization of locally raised organic food and grass fed meat and dairy products, you should pay attention to the Farm Bill. There are dozens of reasons why the Farm Bill is critical to our land, our bodies, and our children's future. Some include:

- The twilight of the cheap oil age and onset of unpredictable climate conditions.
- Looming water shortages and crashing fish populations.
- Broken rural economies.
- Euphoria over agricultural expansion for the production of biofuels and bioplastics.
- Escalating medical and economic costs of child and adult obesity.
- Record payouts to corporate farms that aren't even losing money before subsidies.
- Over 35 million Americans, half of them children, who don't get enough to eat.

Although subsidies do provide a critical safety net in some years to family farms that continue to grow commodities crops, the big players and beneficiaries

in the farm lobby are corporate agribusinesses, grain distributors, food processors, oil companies, absentee landlords, tractor dealers, and gasohol producers. What started as an ambitious temporary effort to lift millions of Americans out of the desperate economic and ecological conditions in the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, slowly devolved into a corporate boondoggle during the great family farm exodus of the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. As a result of the Farm Bill, citizens pay a national food bill at least three times: 1) at the checkout stand; 2) in taxes that subsidize commodity crop production; and 3) in environmental cleanup and medical costs related to the consequences of industrial commodity based agriculture.

Most analysts, most farmers, and even many legislators agree that our present course leaves us unprepared for the urgent challenges we face in the early twenty-first century. The silver lining is that Americans actually do have a substantially large food and farm policy program to debate. Conditions for change have perhaps never been better, as market dynamics and public awareness rapidly align to create uncertainty about farm politics as usual. Indeed, the Farm Bill matters because it can serve as the economic engine that drives small-scale entrepreneurship, on farm research, species protection, nutritional assistance, school lunches, regional development, and habitat restoration, to



It's good news that there are many deeply insightful books and writings on food policy these days. We believe that the broader their audience, the better off we will all be. In this vein, our recent newsletters have included excerpts from Michael Pollan, and from Dan Barber. The piece here is excerpted from an amazing book by Dan Imhoff; the book distills the massive complexity that is Farm Bill into something clear, and is a great rallying point for change. Don't stop after reading the excerpt—get the book!

name just a few. Our challenge is not to abolish government supports altogether, but to ensure that those subsidies we do choose to legislate actually serve as valuable investments in the country's future and allow us to live up to our obligations in the global community. How we get there will be a work in progress. But most observers agree that the era of massive giveaways to corporations and surplus commodity producers must yield to policies that reward stewardship, promote healthy diets, secure regional economies, and do no harm to family farms or hungry kids and their families.

Check Out Our New Web Site!

Go to **www.sustainableagriculture.net** to see the redesign of the National Campaign's web site. Our aim is to provide plenty of information for organizations and citizens who want to understand federal farm policy and its impact, and take action to make it better. We've streamlined the layout and the links, and hope the result will serve you better!

Farm Bill Heats Up

Continued from page 1

Section 2501 outreach and technical assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers is also expanded under the House Bill. It provides \$15 million in annual mandatory funding (FY 07 appropriations was \$5.9 million) to enhance USDA outreach to socially disadvantaged and limited resource producers. The last bit of good news is that thanks to an amendment offered by Representative Gillibrand (D NY) there is a new priority for guaranteed and direct loans under the Business and Industry Loan program to support projects that support community development and farm income by marketing, distributing, or processing a locally or regionally produced product.

Real Reform

Continued from page 1

world to markets that could have been supplied by the producer next door. Within two to five years most policy for food and agriculture will be climate-driven. Public health advocates are also involved in a new and big way, promoting healthy food systems and nutritional education..

We are aiming for a Farm Bill that regionalizes the U.S. food system. A whole suite of programs could change the rules for where food comes from, and provide easy access to fresh healthy foods from local farms for urban and rural areas alike. The biggest sea change comes with no cost, through policy promotion of the purchase of local foods by institutions. (Up till now there has been an actual ban on using geographic preferences for purchasing.) Letting schools buy local will happen in this Farm Bill! But as these rules change, we must also create programs to support supply chains that keep small farmers in the game, favoring a diversity of scale in agriculture. Together, these changes are cheap. This Farm Bill will help, but true success will depend on the next step: ensuring that the benefits of new policy get to the people they are intended for through the implementation cycle that lies ahead.

Loni Kemp, Senior Policy Analyst Minnesota Project

On Conservation: In my view, national farm policy should be a set of incentives to support what we want to see in agriculture, and disincentives to discourage what is bad for the land, farmers and their communities. What is in place now are conflicting policies that drive both good and bad outcomes. As we push for reform we try to withdraw laws that drive industrial agriculture—but it's very

Senate Farm Bill

The Senate seems intent on passing two Farm Bills; one coming out of the Senate Agriculture Committee and the other coming out of the Senate Finance Committee. Chairman Baucus (Finance) intends to mark up a "farm bill - tax bill" to provide \$8 to \$10 billion in much needed funding above the farm bill baseline. As of this writing, Baucus's proposal has not yet been released, but it is expected to contain a permanent disaster program at a cost \$5 billion and several provisions that convert conservation and other program cash payments to tax credits. Finance will go first in this process and as we go to press the expectation is that the Finance Committee mark up won't begin until early October. The National Campaign and our partners have been urging Fi-

hard to take money away from people now receiving it. We have found much greater success in increasing incentives for sustainable agriculture.

From a conservation perspective, the draft bill Senator Harkin is now putting forward really does embody our ideals. The Conserva-

"Food and farm policy is an ongoing cultural and political process, an endless series of give and take from checkout stand to voting booth and people from all walks of life have enormous influence to bear—as citizens, food consumers, business owners, professionals, doctors, nurses, students, teachers, parents, and community members."

(Excerpted from *Food Fight*, by Dan Imhoff – see page 3)

tion Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP) is building on the idea that Americans should invest in working farms so farmers can protect water, soil and wildlife.

We won the basic outline of conservation incentives with the Conservation Security Program five years ago, and 16 million acres are now enrolled. That's substantial success. New changes proposed in CSIP would allow all farms to apply, in every state. The folks already doing a lot will be prioritized and the folks who want to improve the most will get into the program.... no more waiting around for your watershed to be selected, as we've had with the current structure. Basically, it should bring less politics, and more measurable conservation outcomes to the nation's farms.

On Renewable Energy: The realities of global climate change mean we have to change the way we use energy, and agriculture plays a key role. In fact, agriculture is standing at a

finance Committee members to pass a farm bill tax bill that provides at least \$10 billion in additional funding for conservation, rural development, renewable energy and other sustainable agriculture priorities. The Senate Agriculture Committee will likely try to do its markup after Finance does its work and before the Thanksgiving recess which begins October 26th – a very, very tight schedule. Drafts of Senator Harkin's Farm Bill proposal appear to be very favorable to our agenda. The Conservation Title, for example, melds the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Security Program into one comprehensive working lands program available on a national basis. The National Campaign has urged Senate Agriculture Committee members to support the Harkin proposal.

crossroads. We have expanded corn ethanol about as far as we can without harming the environment, but now we have the opportunity to develop cellulosic bioenergy crops. Our vision is that this would rely on perennial plants that protect the soil, or resource conserving crop rotations, so that in producing bioenergy we have the potential to heal

vast areas of this country that are now suffering soil erosion and chemical runoff. We are supporting policy in this Farm Bill that will help farmers establish these cellulose crops.

Kim Leval, Senior Policy Analyst Center for Rural Affairs

Current commodity policy gives really large farms money, which they use to buy more land. Big farms get bigger, and they drive up land prices and farm consolidation. Commodity policy rewards a few, while we lose small and mid sized farmers who are squeezed out. There is real interest in seeing commodity payments capped, and the loopholes that allow people to expand those payments closed.

We want farm program payments targeted to those who need them most, and the savings shifted to conservation, nutrition, rural development, beginning farmers and the like. Instead of driving consolidation, more sustainable policy would increase support for family farms and ranches that want to improve conservation practices, tap into new value added markets, or who may be new to farming or immigrant farmers getting started. We'd like

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The News on Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2008

By Margaret Krome, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

As early predictions of prompt congressional action on FY08 agricultural funding faded into distant memory, National Campaign supporters continued throughout the spring and early summer to remind key appropriators about our priority programs. We particularly focused these messages around the top two priorities chosen in February—the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) program. If you helped arrange for sign-ons to letters to key appropriators or if you called their offices in response to alerts, thank you! You had a major impact.

The timing of the mid-July fly-in (see article below) was superb. Within a week of our fly-in, both House and Senate agricultural appropriators acted on their FY08 appropriations bills, and the outcome was extraordinary, especially for those top two priorities.

- The House increased SARE from \$16.3 million (FY07) to \$18.2 million, and the Senate's \$20 million was the full amount of our request! (The president had asked for \$12.9 million.)
- The House funded ATTRA at \$2.5, and the Senate met our request of \$3 million (The president had zero funded it for FY08). Our gains are exciting, especially given the devastating cuts ATTRA sustained in FY07.
- The Conservation Security Program (CSP) had no new funding limitations placed on it by either House!

The three other priority programs received less favorable funding. The Value Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) was level-funded by the House at \$20.3 million, but cut to \$17.5 million by the Senate. The 2501 program was

increased from FY07 levels of \$5.9 million to \$6.9 million in the House, but level-funded by the Senate. Finally, the Farm to Cafeteria program was zero-funded by both Houses, perhaps because action is expected in the Farm Bill.

Nevertheless, our gains for SARE, ATTRA and CSP were extraordinary, especially in such a difficult budget year. The next step is to retain them. After the full Senate votes on its appropriation levels (only the Committee had voted as of early September), the two Houses will negotiate differences in a House-Senate conference. No date was scheduled for this conference as of this writing, but it is expected sometime during the early to mid-autumn.

If you live in a state with a key agricultural appropriator, please know how important your contacts to them and their aides are. It has made the difference in our successes this year! Thank you!

Farmers Make the Best Case for Better Farm Policy

There is no one better than farmers to get the message to Congress about the need for policy that supports sustainable agriculture, so the National Campaign organized a "fly-in" of farmers to Washington, DC in July. As is often the case, the timing was difficult to work in around the demands of farming—but perfect for getting our message out on Capitol Hill. It fell a week before the House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill markup, days before House Appropriation markup, and while the Senate draft was circulating among staff.

We brought in 31 farmers from 16 states, working together with plenty of help from Campaign partners, the Land Stewardship Project, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, the Organic Farming Research Foundation, and Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. Traveling in teams, our farmers made more than 45 visits with staff and members of the House and Senate Agriculture and Agricultural Appropriations Committees, plus two very successful meetings with USDA and the Office of Management and Budget.

There were many farmers for whom this was the very first trip to DC and they all did a wonderful job. They were briefed to cover several clusters of issues identified as National Campaign priorities around conservation, appropriations, community food security, organic, rural development and the Beginning Farmer Initiative. Beyond the immediate impact of sharing their ideas with members of Congress, the farmers' reports of their experience have since been shared with our Issue Committees to help develop strategies to shape the next phase of advocacy on the Farm Bill as the Senate Bill goes to markup, and as the final version takes shape in the House-Senate Conference.

This important project was made possible thanks to a special grant from an anonymous donor—an important gift with impact that will be felt for years to come!

Update on the National Organic Action Plan: There's Still Time to Get Involved!

The National Organic Action Plan (NOAP) is an open, collaborative project designed to invite farmers and citizens to articulate a vision for the future of U.S. organic agriculture for the next decade. The objective is to help the organic community remain dedicated to sustainability, diversity and justice, but flexible and adaptable in the strategies we use to get there. NOAP is led by Rural Advancement Foundation International, with organizing by the National Campaign.

To date, NOAP meetings have occurred in 8 locations, engaging over 200 participants in day-long discussions about the current state and future vision for organic food and agriculture in the U.S. We have seen incredible optimism and creative vision: participants have looked beyond government to solutions in a diverse marketplace of both goods and ideas. Despite vivid concerns about industrial organic, we've seen enthusiasm and energy about growing opportunities for locally and fairly-produced organic products.

During 2008 more dialogue meetings will take place, and plans will be made for a national Summit in 2009. Please join us! We plan to schedule dialogues in 2008 in the Southwest, Midwest, and the South. Email liana@sustainableagriculture.net to receive dates and details.

Our Partners

Current Partner Organizations in Good Standing

(As of 10/1/07)

For a full list of participating partners please go to our web site at www.sustainableagriculture.net/contributing.php

The following organizations have pledged their partnership with the National Campaign within the past 18 months.

- Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network
- Alternative Energy Resources Organization
- American Farmland Trust
- American Grassfed Association
- Animal Welfare Institute
- Berkshire Co-Op Market
- Big River Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance
- Blueberry Peace Farm
- California Certified Organic Farmers
- California Coalition for Food and Farming
- Campaign For Family Farms And The Environment
- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
- CASA del Llano (Communities Assuring a Sustainable Agriculture)
- CATA (Comte de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas—Farmworker Support Committee)
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Sioux City Iowa
- Center for Food Safety
- Center for Rural Affairs
- Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture
- Chefs Collaborative
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation Clagett Farm
- CitySeed, Inc.
- Community Food Security Coalition *
- Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
- The Cornucopia Institute
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Environmental Law and Policy Center
- Etko Consulting
- Family Farm Defenders
- Family Farms for the Future
- Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
- Florida Certified Organic Growers & Consumers, Inc
- Food Alliance
- Food and Water Watch
- Food Animal Concerns Trust
- Global Resource Action Center for the Environment/Sustainable Table
- grassroots
- Grassroots International
- Heifer Project International *
- Henry A. Wallace Center at Winrock International
- Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers of America
- Humane Society of the United States
- Independent Organic Inspectors Association
- Innovative Farmers of Ohio
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- Just Food
- Kansas Rural Center
- Land Loss Prevention Project
- Land Stewardship Project *
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners' Association
- Maysie's Farm Conservation Center
- McGrath Family Farm
- Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
- Michigan Farmers Union
- Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance
- Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
- Minnesota Food Association
- The Minnesota Project *
- Missouri Farmers Union
- National Association of Latino/Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers
- National Catholic Rural Life Conference
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- National Family Farm Coalition
- National Hmong American Farmers, Inc
- National Network of Forest Practitioners
- Nebraska Farmers Union
- New England Small Farm Institute
- New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
- Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc.
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Rhode Island
- Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
- Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
- Oneota Co-op
- Oregon Tilth
- Organic Consumers Association
- Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM)
- Organic Farming Research Foundation *
- Organic Grassfed Beef Coalition
- Organic Materials Review Institute
- Organic Seed Alliance
- Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative *
- Organization for Competitive Markets
- Oxfam America
- PCC Farmland Fund
- Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
- Pesticide Action Network North America
- Provender Alliance
- Red Tomato
- Rochester Roots: Growing Youth, Growing Community, Growing Food
- Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
- Rodale Institute
- Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA *
- Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
- Southeast Llama Rescue
- Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
- Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture*
- Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
- Trappe Landing Farm and Native Sanctuary
- Tucker Hill Farm
- Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative, Inc.
- Union of Concerned Scientists *
- United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
- University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture
- Urban Agriculture Network, Inc.
- Virginia Association for Biological Farming
- Vote Hemp
- Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network
- Western Organization of Resource Councils
- Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
- WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources

* Each of these National Campaign partners contributed funds in addition to their dues between 2005 and 2007.



Get Involved... Offer Support!

Making it Happen: Our Supporters Funding the National Campaign

We are delighted to acknowledge our deep gratitude to the following foundations, each of which made grants to fund work done in 2007. Their belief in the fundamental importance of a robust national debate on federal agriculture policy makes our work possible.

Agua Fund
Compton Foundation
Donald and Carole Chaiken Foundation
Farm Aid
Helianthus Fund
The Orentreich Family Fund
Oxfam America
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Lawson Valentine Foundation

The McKnight Foundation
Newman's Own Foundation
New York Community Trust
The North Pond Foundation
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Moore Charitable Foundation
Presbyterian Hunger Project
Presbyterian Rural Ministry
Sandy River Charitable Foundation

In 2006, 81% of our revenue came from foundations and 10% from our partners. The final critical 9% was received from individuals, whose donations make them true Contributing Partners in our work. The National Campaign is about *people*, and gifts from individuals are important both to the vitality of our programs, as well as to our financial strength.

Chefs for Better Farm Policy

A rousing thank you to two restaurants on opposite ends of the country who worked with the National Campaign this year to build our base of supporters, and raise awareness of the importance of agriculture policy. On the West Coast, at **Marché Restaurant** in Eugene, Oregon, Executive Chef Rocky Maselli, and Jessica Blaine, worked with our Board member Kim Leval to put together a Grower's Dinner based on fabu-

lous seasonal produce. The dinner raised funds and friends for the National Campaign. On the East Coast, Judy Wicks held a dinner in August at her **White Dog Café**, in Philadelphia, where our Executive Director Deb Burd spoke about food policy and its impact on farmers. We also appreciated the opportunity to participate in two talks on the Farm Bill in New York, at **Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture**.



How to be an Effective Advocate for Policy Change:

- **Don't underestimate your impact.** Our long list of successes was written with grassroots ink.
- **Don't be shy.** Congressional staff are glad to hear from their constituents.
- **Know your power.** You don't have to have numbers and encyclopedic mastery of the ins and outs of policy. Know your key thinking points. If you have a VERY brief story to make the point, share it.
- **Spare the post-cards.** Some kinds of contacts are more effective than others. **Direct meetings** are the best, of course. You don't have to fly to Washington, wait until your member is in the state or district. Writing a **letter** is next most effective (get the fax number from the member's web site; mail delivery in post-9/11 Washington is very slow!). **Phone calls** are next most effective. Finally, **post-cards and emails**, ESPECIALLY emails where you just click a button on someone's website to send a message, are so little regarded by congressional staff as to be close to a waste of time.

The National Campaign's grassroots work is built on individual visits, letters (when there's enough time), phone calls and, occasionally, sign-on letters from groups on particular issues. But it is built on **YOUR ACTION. PLEASE KNOW IT MATTERS!**



Attention Restaurateurs!

The National Campaign has created an elegant card that can be used as a Check Enclosure by restaurants. It's an attractive post-card that encourages diners to become advocates for better food policy by joining our Action Alert List. Contact yancey@sustainableagriculture.net for a supply. You'll be helping us build the base of grassroots advocates ready to speak out for better policy, while you tell your customers that you are taking action to support local agriculture.

Harvest season is also the time of year when we look to receive a bounty of support from all the many folks whose concern for food and farming make them National Campaign donors. We need your help, so please make a contribution today to keep this work going strong!



NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

PO Box 396 • Pine Bush, NY 12566

Please make a year-end gift to support the National Campaign!

Real Reform

Continued from page 4

to see policy support more farmers on the land, and more farmers contributing to local communities, rather than policy that promotes consolidation and depopulating rural places. We hope the Harkin Bill in the Senate will bring us closer, and are pushing for a Bill that reforms the commodity program by capping payments and closing loopholes.

**Kathy Ozer, Executive Director
National Family Farm Coalition**

Real reform would be a farm policy based on the principles of food sovereignty—the right of every society to respect the needs of the land, rural culture, and health. It would re-establish more farmer and community control over our farm and food system. What we have today in the U.S., and imposed on other countries around the world through free trade policies, is a push to produce for import or export through the exploitation of labor, land and the use of dangerous chemicals or biotechnology. This is not sustainable.

One step towards sustainability would be federal policy that enables farmers to earn a fair price from the market; not from taxpayer sup-

ported subsidies. Reform would shift the burden away from taxpayers and to the buyers of the commodities, whether they be grain traders, mega-dairies or livestock operations. Access to grains used for feed at prices far less than the cost of production translates into major profits for these companies at the expense and loss of diversified family farms across the country.

We should re-establish a floor price that reflects a farmer's cost of production, reserves that would ensure stable supplies of grains and feed, supply management programs when needed, and incentives to participate in expanded conservation programs.

**Lorette Picciano, Executive Director
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural**

We are looking for much more equitable treatment of minority farmers—or “socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers” as they are designated by farm programs. We are developing policy strategies that will redirect investment into minority farms in order to overcome past exclusion and gaps, to bring these producers into USDA programs, and ensure equitable delivery of services. One of the ways to do this will be the creation of “set-asides” that ensure minority farmers

receive funding from programs currently budgeted, such as the Conservation Security Program, Value Added Producer Grants, or any new specialty crop programs. Another way will be to make basic changes in structure at USDA that ensure fair delivery of services in the field, including measurable goals for minority participation in farm programs, and transparency and accountability in delivery methods that can track and report on results.

We also believe that farm workers are an important part of agriculture. An office must be created at USDA that can relate to farm workers; and USDA must find ways to ensure that farm workers receive aid like farmers do in times of disaster. Thousands of farmers and ranchers face imminent foreclosure following inadequate protection and outcomes of civil rights complaints, and individual and class action lawsuits.

Congress should establish a Minority Land Preservation Commission and place an immediate stay on foreclosures, pending review by this commission.

