



Photo: USDA NRCS

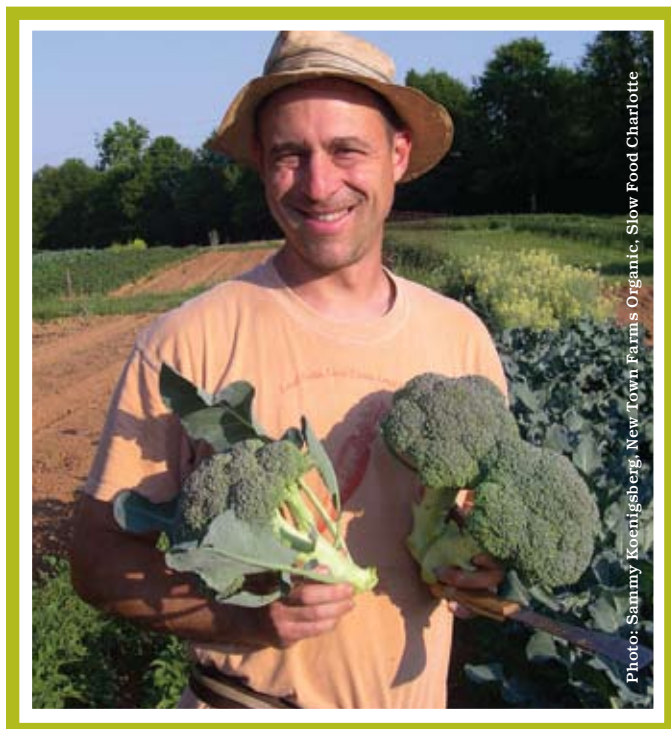
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
2010 Annual Report

We're excited to report on the terrific work of our National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in 2010, with significant victories for sustainable agriculture. Together we provided leadership in passing a new law that enhances food safety while protecting local and regional food systems and a Farm to School program with mandatory funding. We faced many challenges, notably funding threats to National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) priority programs that support sustainable agriculture.

We were able to achieve successes and stem proposed funding cuts because of NSAC's strengths – the local, state, regional, and national reach of the more than 80 organizations in our coalition combined with our Washington, DC policy staff that has well over 50 years combined experience in federal farm and food policy.

Our work is possible because of the energy, ideas, and support of organizations, foundations, farmers, and all who care deeply about making our nation's agricultural policy support a sustainable food system.

- *NSAC Organizational Council Chair Brad Redlin, Izaak Walton League of America, and Vice-Chair Scott Marlow, Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA*



Ensuring a Safe Food System

Ensuring food safety is extremely important, especially in our current system that favors agribusiness-scale industrial food production, with all of its inherent risks. However, the **Food Safety Modernization Act** as originally proposed had significant unintended negative consequences for local food systems, public health, and sustainable and organic agriculture. Its one-size-fits-all approach would have unduly burdened small and mid-sized farmers who are supplying the majority of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables to local and regional markets. This threatened to unravel the regional supply chains for farmers markets, community supported agriculture, farm to school programs, and farm to institution programs that have been expanding in most regions of the country. The bill would have negatively impacted organic farming, conservation, and environmental protection.

NSAC led the way in developing, finding champions for, and generating constituent support to pass eight major amendments. These amendments, which are now law, create size-appropriate responses and focus on the greatest food safety risks while also protecting organic and conservation advancements. They provide training to small and mid-scale farmers and food processors, reduce unnecessary paperwork, and protect wildlife. This is a huge win for farmers, the environment, and public health.

Bringing Farm-Fresh Food to School Children

Working in concert with key allies, NSAC was instrumental in winning \$40 million in mandatory federal funding for **Farm to School**. In a challenging fiscal environment, achieving mandatory funding was a great success, because the alternative – discretionary funding – would require fighting for funds each year in the annual appropriations process. We found champions for this proposal who introduced Farm to School bills in both the Senate and House that became the framework for what was ultimately included in the final Child Nutrition Act reauthorization (CNR) legislation, signed into law by President Obama on December 13, 2010.

We also helped to improve the Farm to School legislative language and marshaled support for passage of CNR during the lame duck session of Congress. The new law creates a grant program within USDA that will help build relationships between family farmers and public schools throughout the US. Grants will target support to programs that will deliver farm-fresh foods, including fruits and vegetables, directly to school children, particularly those in high-need urban, rural, and tribal communities. The program includes nutrition education activities such as farm visits and school gardens. We also successfully advocated for legislative language that allows some value-added processing so schools can buy local products in a form they can easily use for lunches.

Conserving Natural Resources and Protecting the Environment

Sustainable agricultural systems produce important conservation benefits. These systems conserve natural resources, increase energy efficiency, sequester carbon, reduce water, soil, and air pollution, and protect wildlife habitat. NSAC successfully advocates for stronger, better-designed **USDA conservation programs**. Some of our 2010 accomplishments in this area include:

Conservation Stewardship Program

2010 saw the launch of the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the nationwide “green payments” program and successor to the Conservation Security Program. NSAC achieved several major improvements to CSP, including higher payments for grass-based pastured cropland, stricter crop rotation diversification rules, and additional conservation enhancements and payments for sustainable and organic practices. We pushed for and won inclusion of several sustainable livestock practices in the CSP enhancement list that farmers and ranchers may select from, including managed intensive rotational grazing, organic grazing systems, and transitioning marginal cropland to pasture. NSAC broadly publicized the 2010 CSP sign-up period. We provided our member organizations with materials to circulate to farmers and ranchers, including our *Farmers’ Guide to the New Conservation Stewardship Program* and a four-page CSP fact sheet for farmers about the 2010 CSP sign-up

to help them apply for the program. The 2009 and 2010 CSP sign-ups were combined by USDA into a two-part 2010 enrollment of over 20,000 farmers and ranchers on over 25 million acres in all 50 states. Together, they will receive over \$320 million a year over the next five years in return for meeting high environmental performance goals.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative

NSAC helped to create the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organic Initiative in the 2008 Farm Bill. This component of EQIP provides funding to certified organic farmers and farmers transitioning to organic production to implement conservation practices on their land. In 2010, we worked to ensure a successful sign-up period for the EQIP Organic Initiative. Another 1,500 farmers and ranchers enrolled in 2010 and will receive \$25 million over the next three years to transition to organic and improve conservation performance. In addition to our work on the Organic Initiative,



Farmer Mike Heath of M&M Heath Farms in Buhl, Idaho grows 16 different varieties of organic potatoes. He received an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organic Initiative grant for cover cropping and nutrient management. Mike grows Austrian winter peas to add nitrogen and organic matter to the soil. This is just one of his many methods to build soil fertility organically. He described these methods at a field day sponsored by NSAC member organization Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP). NCAP used the field day as an opportunity to spread the word to other farmers about the EQIP Organic Initiative through two articles in *Ag Weekly*.

we also continued advocating for improved implementation of the full EQIP program.

Conservation Reserve Program

Midway through 2010, landowners became eligible for the first time to receive benefits under the Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program (CRP-TIP). NSAC helped to create this program, which encourages owners to sell or lease their land to beginning and/or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers who agree to establish environmentally sustainable farming practices. We led a successful campaign to end a long delay in implementation and to ensure that CRP landowners whose contracts expired during the delay were still eligible. We conducted extensive outreach to farmers and ranchers, resulting in great demand for the program. By the end of 2010, 380 deals were concluded on over 55,000 acres resulting in an additional \$5 million in rental payments to retiring farmers who made their land available to new farmers who will operate with stewardship agreements.

Wetlands Reserve Program

NSAC advocated for funding and assisted with outreach for the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). The USDA enrolled roughly 271,000 acres of wetlands in WRP in FY 2010. This is the largest annual sign-up in the history of the program, which NSAC originally developed back in 1989. The WRP has now enrolled over two million acres of restored wetlands, but faces increasingly intense budget pressures.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative

NSAC was instrumental in creating the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) as part of the last two farm bills. In 2010, we supported inclusion of a new initiative – the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) – as part of the CCPI. MRBI targets funding from CSP, EQIP, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, via CCPI, to reduce nutrient and sediment loading, which degrade water quality within Mississippi River watersheds and ultimately contributes to the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

State Technical Committees

NSAC provides support to sustainable farmers and ranchers who participate in State Technical Committees (STCs), which play a significant role in the implementation of USDA conservation programs. We developed and continue to administer the STC Network, comprised of

sustainable agriculture organizations, conservation and environmental groups, and farmers and ranchers who participate on local STCs. Our network has grown to roughly 100 members in 26 states. It has been incredibly effective in both helping to improve USDA conservation programs and in spreading the word during sign-up periods. In late 2010, we revived the STC Network Newsletter, sent monthly from NSAC to the network. We also contributed to a new publication entitled *NRCS State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups: A Guide for Organic Farmers and Ranchers*.

Conservation Innovation Grant

We began an exciting multi-year project in 2010 to recommend revisions to conservation practice standards and conservation enhancements so they better serve sustainable and organic systems. This competitively-awarded Conservation Innovation Grant project is a rare opportunity for NSAC and several of its member organizations to help amend the basic building blocks of USDA conservation programs, which could result in a generational change to improve environmental standards and create a more level playing field for sustainable agriculture producers.

Advancing Knowledge of Sustainable Farming

To ensure that sustainable agriculture continues to expand and to advance knowledge of better farming methods, NSAC fought to maintain and where possible increase funding for agricultural research programs. We defeated the Administration's proposal to terminate the Organic Transitions research program, returning it to its \$5 million per year funding level. We celebrated the Administration's support for our proposal to increase funding for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program by 50 percent to \$30 million. We also supported the Administration's proposed increase for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and simultaneously pushed USDA to use AFRI funds for sustainable and organic research, including creation of a rural entrepreneurship program (which was agreed to) and a public plant breeding program to develop new, locally-adapted crop varieties (which is still in discussion). Final funding levels for agricultural research and government funding in general was still pending as 2010 came to a close.

Enhancing Rural Communities and Building Food Systems

Throughout 2010, NSAC championed programs that help to revitalize the economies of rural communities and develop new marketing channels, including mid-tier value chains, food hubs, and farmers markets.

Value-Added Producer Grants Program

NSAC helped to create the Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) program in 2000 and developed successful legislative campaigns to improve the program in 2002 and 2008. VAPG provides

about \$20 million per year for competitive grants designed to start value-added producer-owned businesses. The awards made in June 2010 included projects in 45 states worth \$22.5 million, including several mid-tier value chain and regional food development projects. NSAC commented extensively on the proposed rules for the program and pressured USDA and the Administration to further improve them and issue them in a timely fashion.

Farmers Market Promotion Program

We continued to publicize and promote the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), a program initiated by NSAC in the 2002 Farm Bill. The 2010 iteration of FMPP presented awards worth over \$4 million to 86 out of 498 project applications submitted to expand or create direct farmer-to-consumer marketing opportunities. Nearly 30 percent of the total funds went to projects that will be adding Electronic Benefits Transfer capacity so low-income consumers can use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits at farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms.

Credit Programs

NSAC advocated for funding direct farm ownership and farm operating loans for family farmers, including beginning and minority farmers and ranchers. We convinced Congress to approve supplemental appropriations to increase lending resources during this period of continued crisis in the financial sector. We also advocated for the Down Payment Loan Program for beginning farmers to great effect. The program provided more in loans in 2008-2010 than it had in its previous 14 years. In 2010, Farm Service Agency (FSA) made 1,225 down payment loans for beginning farmers nationwide for a total of \$170 million. NSAC-supported credit provisions that target loan funding to beginning and minority farmers and ranchers represent the single biggest source of federal funding for such producers. In 2010, nearly 14,000 loans were made or guaranteed by USDA for beginning farmers, representing a loan volume total of \$1.5 billion.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) enables NGOs, Extension, and others to provide technical assistance, training, and support to beginning and socially



Farmers Market Coalition Member, Crescent City Farmers Market, in New Orleans, Louisiana

Many farmers markets across the country have used Farmers Market Promotion Program grants to purchase and operate Electronic Benefits Transfer machines so they can accept SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) that are now processed electronically, much like debit cards. NSAC member organization, Farmers Market Coalition, spreads the word to its members about the availability of these funds and encourages adoption of EBT machines at markets through education, research, and advocacy.

disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. NSAC worked closely with USDA to achieve successful BFRDP implementation, including issuing effective requests for proposals and advertising the program to potential applicants. USDA awarded 40 BFRDP grants in 2010, including nine to NSAC member organizations.



NSAC member organization, Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI), has been using Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) funds to conduct free online farmer-to-farmer training. To date, there have been over 2,500 live and recorded views of the “farminars.” PFI has also used BFRDP funds to train beginning farmers through its Next Generation Retreat that includes visioning, planning, and goal setting and through its “Farmville - For Real” workshop.

Improving Fairness in Agriculture

Working through a coalition with other organizations united by a mission to make the marketplace more fair for family farmers and ranchers, NSAC prepared comments and conducted media outreach on the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration’s (GIPSA’s) new regulations that will prevent packers and processors from giving undue or unreasonable preference to some livestock and poultry producers at the expense of others. We helped our member organizations submit comments and generate comments from their supporters.

In response to NSAC’s work with our allies, USDA and the Department of Justice held a series five of hearings in 2010 to obtain current information on the degree of concentration in the seed, livestock, and dairy markets. We increased participation

in these hearings and encouraged our supporters to submit comments. The Department of Justice is currently reviewing its guidelines for bringing antitrust actions. These developments may eventually lead to real reform of US agricultural markets that would increase market access and income for small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers.

Supporting Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

NSAC championed funding set-asides and other incentives for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in a number of 2008 Farm Bill programs, including the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, the Value-Added Producer Grants program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program – Transition Incentives Program, Conservation Loan Program, and other loan programs.



Lydia Villanueva (center), a member of NSAC’s Organizational Council, co-leader of NSAC’s Diversity Committee, and Director of NSAC member organization CASA del Llano, led a delegation of four farmers (three Latina and one Latino) to USDA’s 2010 Cooperators Conference, held September 26-28 in St. Louis, Missouri. The event, which brought together an audience of 600 socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers and representatives of community-based organizations, was sponsored by the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach.

NSAC’s Diversity Committee met twice in person in 2010 and more frequently by phone, and began drafting the coalition’s priorities for socially

disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the 2012 Farm Bill. We met with top leadership of USDA's office of Advocacy and Outreach. We supported the efforts of African-American farmers to secure the Pigford II Settlement, a \$1.25 billion settlement of a class-action lawsuit brought against USDA for outstanding discrimination claims. We translated portions of our *Grassroots Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill* into Spanish in an effort to improve accessibility and further enable Spanish-speaking farmers and ranchers to take advantage of Farm Bill programs.

Building Grassroots Capacity

In order to help a wider number of stakeholders participate in USDA programs, we continued producing grassroots guides for sustainable producers and community-based organizations and shared timely information about funding, technical assistance, and other resources. We updated and circulated NSAC's *Grassroots Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill*, which provides basic information to farmers, ranchers, non-profit organizations, and others on NSAC's priority farm bill programs. In April, we published the *Guide to USDA Funding for Local and Regional Food Systems*. We also co-published *Conserving Habitat through the 2008 Farm Bill* and *A Guide for Organic Farmers and Ranchers: NRCS Technical Committees and Local Working Groups*.

At the end of June, NSAC hosted 11 farmers from around the country who came to Washington, DC for our budget and appropriations "fly-in." The farmers met with key USDA officials and congressional offices, explaining the need for conservation technical assistance and investment in research. They also spoke to the utility of USDA conservation programs.

NSAC played a capacity-building role for our member organizations, providing expert advice, timely policy updates, and action alerts. Our coalition provided over \$35,000 to member organizations in 2010 through our Strategic Initiative mini-grant program to engage farmers and other constituents in policy development and advocacy.

In 2010, NSAC launched *Farm and Agriculture Resources for the Media* (FARM). This project prepares farmer spokespeople to talk with the



Photo: Amy Courtney

NSAC brings farmers from the field to Washington, DC to talk with members of Congress about the issues that matter to them. Amy Courtney and two partners expanded Freewheelin' Farm from a half acre in 2002 to eight acres today to grow more than 30 crops for 75 CSA members, schools, local restaurants, and farmers markets. As a participant in California FarmLink's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account Matched Savings Program, Amy used her savings to purchase a small tractor and spader that helped her grow the business. In July 2010, Amy traveled to DC with the help of NSAC and California FarmLink to explain the importance of the programs NSAC supports.

media about farm and food policy issues by providing training and a media toolkit. It also helps NSAC to better connect reporters with farmers and ranchers who benefit from NSAC priority programs.

In 2010, NSAC planned *The Road to Reform: 2012 Farm Bill Summit*, which was held in January, 2011 in Washington, DC. The summit brought together 125 participants representing 95 organizations, some from within NSAC as well as allies from outside the coalition. Organizations included farm, conservation, rural development, public health, food system, socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher, faith community, and other groups engaged in furthering the aims of the public interest community in the next farm bill. We identified opportunities to work together and planned next steps toward realizing our visions for better agriculture policy in the upcoming farm bill reauthorization.

Members

REPRESENTED MEMBERS

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) – Salinas, CA

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) – Helena, MT

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) – Santa Cruz, CA

California FarmLink – Sebastopol, CA

CASA del Llano (Communities Assuring a Sustainable Agriculture) – Hereford, TX

Center for Rural Affairs – Lyons, NE

Clagett Farm/Chesapeake Bay Foundation – Upper Marlboro, MD

Community Alliance with Family Farmers – Davis, CA

Dakota Rural Action – Brookings, SD

Delta Land and Community, Inc. – Almyra, AR

Ecological Farming Association – Soquel, CA

Fay-Penn Economic Development Council – Uniontown, PA

Flats Mentor Farm – Lancaster, MA

Florida Organic Growers – Gainesville, FL

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) – Chicago, IL

GrassWorks – Hudson, WI

Illinois Stewardship Alliance – Springfield, IL

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy – Minneapolis, MN

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation – Des Moines, IA

Island Grown Initiative – Vineyard Haven, MA

Izaak Walton League – St. Paul, MN/Gaithersburg, MD

Kansas Rural Center – Whiting, KS

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture – Poteau, OK

Land Stewardship Project – Minneapolis, MN

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute – East Troy, WI

Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems – East Lansing, MI

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance – Lansing, MI

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service – Spring Valley, WI

National Catholic Rural Life Conference – Des Moines, IA

National Center for Appropriate Technology – Butte, MT

Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society – Ceresco, NE

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) – Deerfield, MA

Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society – LaMoure, ND

Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides – Eugene, OR

Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association – Columbus, OH

Organic Farming Research Foundation – Santa Cruz, CA

Rural Advancement Foundation International, USA – Pittsboro, NC

Union of Concerned Scientists (Food and Environment Program) – Cambridge, MA/Washington, DC

Virginia Association for Biological Farming – Lexington, VA

Wild Farm Alliance – Watsonville, CA

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network – Birmingham, AL

Angelic Organics Learning Center – Caledonia, IL/Chicago, IL

California Climate & Agriculture Network – Sebastopol, CA
 Carolina Farm Stewardship Association – Pittsboro, NC
 Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, University of Wisconsin-Madison – Madison, WI
 Center for a Livable Future, Johns Hopkins University – Baltimore, MD
 City Seed – New Haven, CT
 C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems – Michigan State University – East Lansing, MI
 Farm Aid – Cambridge, MA
 Farm to Table – New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council – Santa Fe, NM
 Farmers Market Coalition – Des Moines, IA
 Food Systems Economic Partnership – Ann Arbor, MI
 Future Harvest/CASA (Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture) – Stevensville, MD
 Georgia Organics – Atlanta, GA
 Heifer International – Little Rock, AR
 Henry A. Wallace Center, Winrock International – Arlington, VA
 Humane Society of the United States – Washington, DC
 Innovative Farmers of Ohio – Powell, OH
 Iowa Environmental Council – Des Moines, IA
 Iowa Farmers Union – Ames, IA
 Land for Good – Keene, NH/Belchertown, MA
 Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture – Iowa State University – Ames, IA
 Maine Rural Partners – Orono, ME
 Michigan Land Use Institute – Traverse City, MI
 Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture – University of Minnesota – St. Paul, MN
 Nebraska Wildlife Federation – Lincoln, NE
 Northeast Organic Farming Association – Interstate Council (NOFA-IC) – NY, MA, RI, VT, CT, NH, NJ
 Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing, Inc. (OFARM) – Brussels, WI
 Organic Valley – LaFarge, WI
 PCC Farmland Trust – Seattle, WA
 Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture – Millheim, PA
 Pesticide Action Network North America – San Francisco, CA
 Practical Farmers of Iowa – Ames, IA
 Roots of Change – San Francisco, CA
 Slow Food USA – Brooklyn, NY
 Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture – Pocantico Hills, NY
 Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota – Princeton, MN
 Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network – Mt. Vernon, WA
 Women, Food, and Agriculture Network – Ames, IA
 Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network (WSFFN) – Mt. Vernon, WA
 Wisconsin Farmers Union – Chippewa Falls, WI
 Women, Food, and Agriculture Network – Ames, IA
 WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources – Pullman, WA

AFFILIATED REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
 Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
 Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
 Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

2010 Revenue & Expenses

Revenue	
Donations	\$50,382
Grants	\$1,088,138
Grants Receivable*	\$414,945
Dues & Registrations	\$56,218
Other Income	\$21,158
Total Revenue	\$1,630,842

Expenses	
Salaries and Wages	\$358,499
Employee Benefits	\$141,270
Temporary Employees & Interns	\$43,832
Consultants	\$28,481
Strategic Initiative Grants	\$36,438
Subcontracts	\$98,468
Meeting Expenses	\$32,423
Staff Registrations	\$912
Travel (including farmer travel)	\$26,132
Supplies & Equipment	\$9,395
Publications & Subscriptions	\$14,026
Postage	\$535
Printing	\$5,226
Telephone & Conference Calls	\$11,913
Office Space	\$52,682
Other Expenses	4,680
Total Program Expenses	\$864,913
Grant Administration	\$86,038
Total Expenses	\$950,951

*Grants Receivable are future years of multi-year grants.

Staff

Susan Prolman, Executive Director

Ferd Hoefner, Policy Director

Martha Noble, Senior Policy Associate

Greg Fogel, Policy Associate

Helen Dombalis, Policy Associate

Julie Hudson, Director of Development

Annette Higby, Grassroots Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator

2010 Donor List

Agua Fund
BFK Foundation
Cedar Tree Foundation
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Farm Aid
Helianthus Fund
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Kresge Foundation
Krehbiel Family Foundation
Lawson Valentine Foundation
McKnight Foundation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
New Belgium Brewing
Newman's Own Foundation
New World Foundation
North Pond Foundation
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Valley
David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Patagonia
Presbyterian Hunger Program
Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund
Vervane Foundation
Walton Family Foundation
Whole Foods
....and many generous individuals whom we greatly appreciate, because we can't do this work without your support!

2010 Strategic Initiative Grants

NSAC assists its member organizations by providing modest financial support so they can engage in grassroots actions to advance our collective policy goals on key issues, in key states, at key times. The strategic grants are used to build the education and outreach capacity of NSAC member groups to assist farmers in participating in USDA programs, to encourage grassroots participation in developing policy options, and to advocate for change.

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) to engage NESAWG organizations in agricultural appropriations advocacy by assisting them in building relationships with target congressional offices through in-district meetings and other strategic grassroots actions. NESAWG engaged at least one new organization in each of these districts.

Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) to organize an in-district meeting with a member of the House agriculture committee during the August congressional recess focusing on the needs of organic farmers in southern Idaho, as well as refugee farmers in southwest Idaho. Farmers sought increased support for NCAP and NSAC priorities, including organic, conservation, research, and beginning farmer programs.

Center for Rural Affairs and the **Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society** to conduct extensive targeted outreach around Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), EQIP Organic Initiative, Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program, and Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG). Grassroots actions included issuing alerts, engaging farmers in town hall meetings, and conducting a farm tour to gain the support of Nebraska Senators and key Representatives for these programs.

Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (WSAWG) to organize in-district visits with members of Congress during August break in Montana, Colorado, Oregon, Wyoming, and Idaho, and to conduct listening sessions among three socially disadvantaged communities on barriers to engagement in policy advocacy.

Organizational Council

Chair, Brad Redlin, Izaak Walton League of America

Vice-Chair, Scott Marlow, Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA

Treasurer, Jeff Schahczenski, National Center for Appropriate Technology

Secretary, Robert Junk, Fay-Penn Economic Development Council

Traci Bruckner, Center for Rural Affairs

Kathy Ruhf, Land For Good

Lydia Villanueva, CASA del Llano

Duane Sand, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

Jeanne Merrill, California Climate and Agriculture Network

Julia Olmstead, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Bonnie Bobb, Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA, WSAWG, and NESAWG to conduct a regional assessment of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program among stakeholders.

Farmers Market Coalition to organize a grassroots network of farmers market managers, producers, and state farmers market associations to build support for the Farmers Market Promotion Program among key members of the Senate and House agriculture committees through in-district meetings, Hill visits, newsletters, and action alerts.

Illinois Stewardship Alliance to create a policy advisory committee of farmers, consumers, and other stakeholders; to garner input and discussion around NSAC farm bill priorities; and to organize in-district meetings between stakeholders and policy makers with a particular focus on farmers markets, local food system development, specialty crops, and conservation programs.

Michigan Land Use Institute to gather input on NSAC farm bill priorities, cultivate five or more farmer leaders, and host a farm tour and in-district meetings.

Nebraska Wildlife Federation to host workshops to gather input and to educate farmers, ranchers, and conservation professionals about the wildlife benefits of CSP; to identify and cultivate spokespeople for CSP; to educate farmers, media, and congressional staff on the benefits of the program.

NESAWG to empower NESAWG and NSAC organizations as well as new organizations and grassroots leaders in New York and Maine to advocate in support of funding for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Program, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, and VAPG.

NCAP to secure representation of organic farmers at the Idaho NRCS State Technical Committee annual meeting and to ensure organic farmer participation in the newly created organic/small acreage subcommittee charged with reviewing practice standards and payment schedules.

Georgia Organics to engage and empower sustainable and organic farmer leaders to interface with key policy makers in Georgia in support of NSAC priority programs through in-district and on-farm meetings; and to develop a farmer/citizen empowerment tool kit to encourage action on the next farm bill.



National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

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Photo: www.emilyhartphotography.com for National Farm to School Network

NSAC's mission is to create, advance, and promote federal policies and programs that:

- Rebuild local and regional food systems;
- Increase access to nutritious, sustainably-produced foods, including to low-income consumers;
- Encourage agricultural practices that conserve soil, water, wildlife habitat, and energy resources;
- Expand cutting edge on-farm research and extension for sustainable agriculture;
- Revitalize rural economies and encourage new entrepreneurship;
- Ensure opportunity and fairness for small and medium-sized family farms and ranches;
- Enhance the ability of beginning farmers and ranchers to succeed; and
- Provide needed support for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, including minorities, immigrants, and women.



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The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is an alliance of over 80 grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities.