



NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE COALITION

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

For the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), 2016 was a year full of change and even some challenges, in which flexibility and the ability to adapt were key. We know, however, that adaptation is the name of the game – both in sustainable agriculture and in life. Thankfully, NSAC is one of the most resilient and adaptable organizations I have ever been a part of. The coalition's dualistic approach, which combines in-depth policy work with grassroots advocacy and outreach, means that NSAC is always positioned to defend programs and policies that matter to American family farmers and sustainable agriculture advocates. NSAC secured many victories for the sustainable agriculture community in 2016, including:

- **Convinced USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) to revise their "Good Farming Practices" (GFP) standard so that conservation practices promoted by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service were also considered GFP. This is important because it means that farmers won't be penalized by one agency for implementing conservation practices through another agency.**
- **Championed the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) program as a better risk management solution for underserved farmers; sales of WFRP insurance have nearly doubled in its second year.**
- **Advocated successfully for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to issue guidance that the term "grass fed" means 100% grass fed, a clarification that protects the integrity of the grass fed label.**

To do this work, NSAC relies on support from our experienced DC-based staff, as well as on the input and advocacy of member organizations across the country.

This past year, we had some significant growth and planned transitions that added to our staff capacity. Long-time Policy Director Ferd Hoefner moved into a new advisory role and former Senior Policy Specialist Greg Fogel was promoted as our new policy team leader. We also brought on three new faces: Associate Director of Communications and Development Reana Kovalcik, Policy Specialist Wes King, and Grassroots Advocacy Coordinator Marla Karina Larrave.

We also built our coalition's capacity by adding new member groups and expanding our racial equity work. Our grassroots team continued to make big things happen throughout the year by spearheading impactful events and outreach, including organizing four farmer fly-ins. Farmer fly-in events bring voices from farm country to our nation's capital and ensure that legislators hear directly from their own constituencies about sustainable agriculture policies that positively impact their lives and businesses.

We are thankful for the collaboration and support of the organizations and individuals who partnered with us in 2016, and look forward to working with our partners to build the movement and continue advancing sustainable food and agriculture programs and policies in the coming year.

Teresa Opheim

*Practical Farmers of Iowa
Chair, NSAC Organizational Council*

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) is an alliance of over 100 grassroots organizations (see pages 18-19 for a list of member organizations) that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and agricultural communities. Our vision is one in which farmers can produce a healthful, affordable food supply while also protecting the environment and supporting their families. This vision guides our work to advance federal policies that conserve natural resources, promote diversified and organic farming, strengthen local food systems, and help beginning and underrepresented farmers succeed.

NSAC was founded upon two shared priorities:

- **To research, develop, and advocate for federal policies relating to farm, food, and environmental issues, and appropriations, and to conscientiously implement those policies.**
- **To support, build, and engage the grassroots of agricultural communities for the long-term health and vitality of the sustainable agriculture movement.**

Since 2009, NSAC has been a national leader in the development and implementation of federal sustainable agriculture policies. Our effectiveness is due in large part to the employment of a comprehensive strategy that combines expert policy analysis, direct engagement with key decision-makers, and a robust grassroots advocacy platform. NSAC staff is based in Washington, DC and engages regularly with member organizations across the country to coordinate our grassroots advocacy campaigns and advance our shared policy priorities.

NSAC amplifies grassroots voices and brings local knowledge to the forefront of the federal policymaking process. Our member organizations elevate issues and ideas from the farmers and communities they serve, and together we set priorities and build campaigns based on the policies that can best strengthen those constituencies. NSAC member groups lead efforts to mobilize and build the power of the farmers, rural businesses, and conservationists in their communities, and then NSAC's DC-based team amplifies and represents their priorities on the Hill. Through our high-impact advocacy and outreach, NSAC catalyzes policy change to help create a healthier, more diverse, equitable, and environmentally sound food and farming system.

ABOUT NSAC





► **The coalition works together at the national level to advocate for better federal food and agricultural policy**

THE COALITION

NSAC is a coalition-based organization with member groups across the United States. While many of our member organizations work at the local, state and regional levels in their own particular focal areas, the coalition works together at the national level to advocate for better federal food and agricultural policy.

NSAC was formed by the 2009 merger of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, organizations with long histories of advocacy in the food and farm space. For nearly 30 years, we have developed and supported policies to create a sustainable and robust food and farm system that supports farmers, preserves natural resources, and provides healthy food to communities. This work requires deep and diverse knowledge, and the NSAC staff excel at leveraging their expertise to create real change at the national level. To date, no other organization has created and helped to implement more federal policies that support sustainable and equitable food and farm systems. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Conservation programs that reward farmers for protecting the soil, air, and water on their land while maintaining an active farming operation, including: the Conservation Reserve Program buffer initiative; the Wetlands Reserve Program; Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative; and the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Programs supporting organic, beginning, and underrepresented farmers (e.g., the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, National Organic Certification Cost Share Program); value-added food businesses and direct farmer-to-consumer and local and regional marketing (e.g., the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program); and innovative agricultural research (e.g., the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program).

NSAC and our member organizations work in a complementary manner in order to cover a broad spectrum of activities – more than any one of us could on our own. We rely on our members to solicit farmer and citizen input, “groundtruth” policy proposals, and to conduct outreach and implementation work on the local/state/regional level. In turn, our member organizations rely on the NSAC office for first-class representation, connection to Congress and federal agencies, timely information, and expert advice.



OUR WORK

INTRODUCTION

2016 was a year of preparation and transition for the NSAC team. Early in the year we wound down much, but not all, of our work on Farm Bill 2014 implementation, and began the process of setting our priorities for the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill. NSAC staff held two farmer listening sessions (at the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association conferences), which will be followed in 2017 by additional listening sessions around the country. These were great opportunities for us to begin getting direct input from farmers and ranchers on the issues that matter most to them. We also worked closely with our issue committees to scope and develop “marker bills,” legislation meant to introduce specific issues or measures into the larger legislative debate. NSAC priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill include: comprehensive conservation reform, beginning farmers and ranchers, local and regional food systems, “seeds and breeds” research, and crop insurance reform. These priorities were approved by the coalition in 2016 and will be voted upon at NSAC’s 2017 Winter Meeting.

Late in the year, we also devoted considerable resources to analyzing the platforms of the 2016 presidential candidates and preparing transition materials for a potential Democratic or Republican administration. Though some of our transition work was slowed by the lack of a nominee for Secretary of Agriculture, we did manage to make significant inroads with transition team members, and delivered our formal recommendations on a range of food and agricultural policies to key personnel. Several new Congress Members were also elected to office in 2016, including new members of the Appropriations and Agriculture Committees, and NSAC worked swiftly to form relationships with those offices.

In addition to laying the groundwork for our 2018 Farm Bill platform and preparing for a new presidential administration and new Congress, NSAC also completed significant work on our 2016 policy priorities: working lands conservation programs, crop insurance reform, product labeling reform, appropriations, and the Child Nutrition Act reauthorization (CNR).

**2016 was a year
of preparation and
transition for the
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WORKING LANDS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Voluntary conservation programs, like the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), are the primary means through which farmers, ranchers, and foresters build soil health, sequester carbon, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. While NSAC continued to defend all our priority conservation programs through 2016, we focused significant time and resources on CSP given the historic “reinvention” of the program undertaken in 2016.



Championing the Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP is built on the belief that our production of food, fiber, and energy must take place while we simultaneously protect and enhance our natural resources. By providing comprehensive conservation assistance, CSP offers farmers the opportunity to earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, rotational grazing, ecologically-based pest management, and buffer strips – even while they work their lands commercially. CSP also supports farmers who want to make the transition from conventional to organic production.

Despite a challenging reinvention process, during which information was particularly difficult to obtain and coordination between USDA and farmer groups was minimal, NSAC was able to secure key victories in our work on CSP: the final Application Evaluation and Ranking Tool was revised to include the applicant’s current level of stewardship; the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) publicly provided information on how payments for a participant’s baseline level of conservation will be determined; USDA incorporated state and local concerns by utilizing input from farmers, ranchers, and partners on State Technical Committees (STCs) and local workgroups; and farmers’ options for conservation activities (practices, enhancements, and bundles of enhancements) have been significantly expanded.

In April 2016, we submitted a proposal for a climate change mitigation bundle within CSP to NRCS. We met with the NRCS Chief to discuss the full proposal, and while the bundle was not adopted as a part of the 2017 reinvention, important changes were made to CSP enhancements as a result of these recommendations, moving us closer toward our climate objectives for the program.

In November, after two years of intensive planning by NRCS to develop programmatic changes, USDA opened the fiscal year (FY) 2017 CSP sign-up period. NSAC followed the CSP reinvention process closely and coordinated advocacy efforts – both in DC and on the ground in farm country – to advocate for program updates that make CSP more transparent, accessible, and flexible.

NSAC also played a critical role in promoting the sign-up period and disseminating resources for farmers. We published ongoing analysis and reinvention updates on our blog, which explained the changes to CSP and our assessment of NRCS’ process. We also kept our grassroots supporters engaged through information alerts that helped NSAC member organizations effectively promote the sign-up period. Finally, we released an updated version of our *Farmers’ Guide to the Conservation Stewardship Program*, and issued a press release that alerted the media and public to all of our available resources.

CSP’s footprint is enormous – with more than 70 million acres of working farm and ranch lands currently enrolled, it is the nation’s largest working lands conservation program. NRCS is authorized to enroll an additional 10 million acres in CSP in FY 2017, at which time more than 12 million acres will also be up for renewal.

CROP INSURANCE REFORM

Farmers' reliance on the federal crop insurance program as an integral part of the farm safety net has grown increasingly over the last several years; with that growth have come many concerns from family farmers that the program may not equitably serve all types of producers. In response, NSAC launched a multi-year campaign to ensure fairness and equity in federal crop insurance. Our goal is to leverage the power of the program to better support beginning and historically underrepresented producers, build up the growing local and organic food markets, and encourage the adoption of conservation practices that mitigate climate change and its impacts on farms and the food supply.

Specifically, this campaign will work to reform crop insurance and subsidy programs to: appropriately distribute risk and costs between the farmer and government; incentivize conservation farming methods and dis-incentivize farming activities that are risky or destructive to the environment; be as accessible to small, socially disadvantaged, underrepresented, and specialty/organic crop growers as they currently are to commodity crop growers.

Through 2016, NSAC laid the groundwork for this campaign by organizing and educating our member groups, identifying key stakeholders, and developing robust analytical materials. The core product produced during this period was a 50-page scoping paper, which outlined NSAC's comprehensive reform campaign and distilled our priorities and positions on key issues.

NSAC staff also participated in several formal and informal crop insurance working groups during this time, through which we were able to build alliances with like-minded organizations and ground-truth our positions and proposals. Key victories secured during 2016 include, but are not limited to:

Aligning conservation priorities between USDA agencies

Every farmer with crop insurance knows they need to comply with the Risk Management Agency's (RMA) "Good Farming Practices" (GFP) standard in order to maintain their coverage. Until December 2016, however, many best practices widely recognized and used by conservation-oriented farmers were not considered good farming practices by RMA. In fact, using some conservation practices promoted and defined by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – including planting cover crops and using Integrated Pest Management systems – could have endangered a farmer's coverage. Following years of ongoing work with RMA and NRCS, RMA revised their "Good Farming Practices Handbook" to make clear that NRCS practices are also considered GFP. This long-awaited change puts RMA on the path toward ensuring that farmers who engage in beneficial conservation practices will not be penalized through their crop insurance.

Our goal is to leverage the power of the program to better support beginning and historically under-represented producers

Expansion of the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection Program

In only its second year on the market, sales of **Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP)** insurance have nearly doubled – from 1,110 policies in 2015 to 2,143 in 2016. This is great news for a relatively new risk-management product that is targeted towards diversified and other underserved producers. WFRP has immense potential to bring risk-management solutions to a broader and more diverse group of farmers across the country, so this level of growth is extremely encouraging.

Two years ago, WFRP was introduced to replace two predecessor policies, the Adjusted Gross Revenue and Adjusted Gross Revenue Lite policies, which combined never sold more than 1,100 policies in any year. Unlike traditional crop or revenue-based insurance, the whole-farm policy is designed to cover all of a farmer's crops and livestock under a single revenue policy and is the only crop insurance policy available in every state and county.



PHOTO © USDA

PRODUCT LABELING REFORM

Public demand for transparency and integrity in food labeling is growing, and NSAC recognizes this. Food labeling claims (e.g., local, natural, grass fed) are a confusing mix of simple words whose meaning is anything but, and complex certifications that even some in the food industry would struggle to explain. Our gains in other policy areas can be significantly undermined by confusion and misinformation in the marketplace due to deceptive and/or misleading labeling claims on agricultural products. Indeed, the co-opting of terms such as “natural,” “local,” and “sustainable” has already made making our case to the public and policy-makers on a range of conservation, rural development, and competition issues more difficult. Consumers are increasingly mystified by competing product labeling claims, and more must be done to clear up confusion in the marketplace and protect both consumers and producers committed to sustainable practices.

NSAC spent much of 2016 developing, vetting, and ultimately finalizing a policy framework for our ongoing engagement on product labeling reform. This framework provides guidance to assist the coalition in determining when to weigh in on a particular federal labeling claim issue, and - if we choose to weigh in - what principles and criteria to consider in evaluating and assessing a particular claim. In 2017, NSAC will continue this work by developing strategies for grassroots and policy action in response to product labeling issues. In addition to creating this policy framework, the coalition weighed in on a number of agency actions related to product labeling issues.

In January, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) rescinded the labeling standard for grass fed meat (a standard developed over the course of four years in concert with national farm and consumer organizations, including NSAC). Furthermore, USDA claimed that AMS never had the legal authority to establish the standard in the first place, but rather, that grass fed labeling standards fell within the purview of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). NSAC released a press release criticizing the decision, joined with food and farm groups in a sign-on letter to FSIS, and encouraged our grassroots supporters to contact both AMS and FSIS to voice their support for a grass fed standard. Through collaborative advocacy with farm and consumer allies, we urged FSIS to adopt the withdrawn AMS standard. Our hard work paid off when FSIS released a guidance document in September confirming that “grass fed” on a label must mean 100% grass fed (even though the agency can technically still approve lesser claims).

In May, NSAC responded to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) request for information on whether and how the agency should define the use of the term “natural” as a labeling claim. Given the widespread abuse of the term “natural” in the marketplace, we believe there is a role for government to play in combating deceptive and misleading use of the term by food processors and manufacturers using artificial, non-food ingredients and processing aids.

NSAC's Food System Integrity Committee developed a set of comments that emphasized the importance of transparent standards and claims that are meaningful and easy to understand. We also submitted recommendations that FDA's role in overseeing claims related to “natural” foods properly accounts for the existing USDA Organic label, as well as the difference between production and processing claims.

In August, FSIS released guidance on “non-GMO” labeling claims – meat, poultry, and egg products that were produced without genetically modified (GM) ingredients or animal feed – and provided a 60-day window for the public to comment. NSAC disputed the agency's position that products under their jurisdiction can carry a non-GMO labeling claim despite containing materials or ingredients derived from animals that were fed GMO feed. We called on FSIS to align their guidance with consumer and farmer expectations, and urged them to ensure that any third-party certifier of a non-GMO labeling claim establish clear and verifiable standards, which would prevent products derived from animals fed GMO feed from carrying a non-GMO label.



PHOTO © USDA

APPROPRIATIONS

The final appropriations package for fiscal year (FY) 2016 was passed by Congress in December 2015, nearly three months after the end of the fiscal year. By hosting farmer fly-ins (events wherein NSAC brings farmers and farm advocates to DC to speak directly with key legislators) throughout the year, working closely with legislators, and advocating alongside our member groups, NSAC helped to secure several key victories in the FY 2016 omnibus package:

- **NSAC led the fight to prevent congressional appropriators from using backdoor “policy riders” to cut mandatory program funding from farm bill conservation programs. NSAC helped to launch a letter, signed by 33 Senators, urging the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee to oppose any cuts to federal conservation programs. In the Senate’s final appropriations bill no cuts were proposed to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), a significant victory given the immense pressure to reappropriate conservation funds to fill other funding gaps.**
- **Doubled funding to \$5 million for the **Food Safety Outreach Program**, also known as the National Food Safety Training, Education, Extension, Outreach and Technical Assistance program.**

→ **We diligently fought for our appropriations priorities and were able to secure important provisional victories**

- **Sustainable agriculture research scored its biggest victory since FY 2014 with a nearly 9 percent increase in funding for the **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education** program, USDA’s only competitive grant research program with a clear and consistent focus on sustainability and farmer-driven research. The omnibus funded SARE at \$24.7 million, the highest level in the program’s nearly 30-year history.**
- **Increased funding for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) from \$325 million to \$350 million. This will allow USDA to fund more public plant breeding and cultivar development research, as well as more mid-size farm profitability and regional food economy research.**

The FY 2017 budget was even more of a laborious and delayed process than FY 2016, and by the end of the year Congress still had not been able to pass a reconciled budget. Throughout the year, however, NSAC diligently fought for our appropriations priorities and were able to secure important provisional victories, including:

- **Ensured the availability of federal farm operating loan funds – particularly for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers – would be available throughout the year with no gaps in service. NSAC and our partners **sent a letter** to Congressional appropriators requesting increased funding for the Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) operating loans program, and in September 2016 lawmakers allocated **\$185 million in stop-gap funding** to wipe out FSA’s backlog of borrowers and take 2,000 approved loan applicants out of limbo. In December, NSAC scored another victory when congressional**

appropriators agreed to include a provision in the continuing resolution to allow USDA to make loans to farmers and ranchers in proportion to demand. This provision made it possible for USDA to offer credit to beginning and other family farmers during the winter and spring months, when loan demand peaks, without running out of loan funds.

- **No cuts to farm bill funding for CSP or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the heart of USDA’s working lands conservation programming, for the first time during the Obama Administration.**
- **NSAC partnered with over 140 farm and conservation groups on a letter urging Congress to protect mandatory funding for farm bill conservation programs. Concurrent with the delivery of the national letter, organizations from several key appropriators’ states also delivered letters asking their representatives to support funding for conservation programs.**
- **Secured full funding (for the first time) for the 2501 Program in the President’s budget request.**
- **Ensured the passage of the first FY 2017 Continuing Resolution (CR) with no harmful policy riders around fair competition. Because no policy riders were put forward, USDA was finally able to advance the “Farmer Fair Practices Rules” to give contract producers basic rights and protections. To date this is the closest USDA has ever come to finalizing these critical rules (which have been years in the making).**

At the end of the year, Congress passed a second CR to extend FY 2016 funding levels through April 2017. This means that our 2016 appropriations efforts for FY 2017 will carry over into the following year.

CHILD NUTRITION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Congress revisits child nutrition program legislation approximately every five years in a single omnibus bill known as the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, or the Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization (CNR) for short.

NSAC has worked alongside our partner and member organization, the National Farm to School Network (NFSN), since the summer of 2014 to foster a large, diverse, engaged grassroots campaign to support farm to school. Our goals included: swift congressional action on CNR; a CNR that retained robust support for farm to school; and a CNR that did not cut support to other vital anti-hunger and nutrition programs.

Despite a slow-moving congressional CNR process, NSAC kept our grassroots supporters engaged with regular updates and action opportunities throughout the year.

In June, NSAC led a well-received policy workshop at the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference with NFSN and Farm to Table New Mexico (also an NSAC member). NSAC and NFSN then delivered over 500 paper plate messages created at the conference to key champions (lead sponsors of the Farm to School Act of 2015 marker bill) in Congress as a way of thanking supportive members and solidifying allies for the future.

Insofar as the CNR was able to move through the legislative process this year, NSAC was able to achieve our goals. The Senate Agriculture Committee marked up a CNR bipartisan compromise in January of 2016 that included provisions from the Farm to School Act of 2015 and doubled funding (from \$5 to \$10 million) for the Farm to School Grant Program. In April 2016, the House Education and Workforce Committee passed a partisan CNR that also included the policy changes we were seeking and doubled the funding for the Farm to School Grant Program.

Unfortunately, due to budget issues and a host of other political complications, neither the House nor the Senate bill ever came to a full floor vote. However, given our success at having our priorities from the Farm to School Act of 2015 (as well as our funding requests) met in both chambers' CNR bills, we believe that should the process restart in 2017, our efforts will have laid a solid foundation for renewing partnerships and securing support for new CNR bills that retain our priorities.

Our efforts will have laid a solid foundation for renewing partnerships and securing support for new CNR bills that retain our priorities



GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

NSAC is led by our members, and, in turn, our shared grassroots base: farmers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and eaters. Throughout 2016, farmers and grassroots advocates across the country joined NSAC in building congressional champions of sustainable agriculture. Our member organizations and supporters played an active role in shaping NSAC's policy recommendations and solutions, advocating directly for needed policy and programmatic changes, sharing news and actions on social media, growing our collective base of engaged farmers and advocates, and much more.

As always, our membership met twice in person during the 2016 calendar year – we convened first in January in Davis, California and then in August in Orono, Maine. In-person meetings are NSAC's opportunity to strategize with our membership, develop campaigns, vote on priorities, and most importantly, to strengthen our relationships and shared vision for sustainable agriculture. In addition, in 2016 we debuted an in-depth New Member Bootcamp to ground new coalition members in the fundamentals of federal policy and time-tested advocacy strategies for building power.

→ **Ensuring grassroots voices are heard in Washington, DC is central to our work**

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2016 GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGNS:

- **NSAC kicked off a series of farm bill listening sessions at sustainable food and farm conferences that were designed and conducted in close partnership with our members. These sessions provided a critical grassroots platform for farmers, community leaders, conservationists, and entrepreneurs to weigh in on a range of policy issues. Participants shared challenges, ideas, and needs with our team. Listening sessions are core to our policy development process and will continue into 2017.**
- **We developed a first-of-its-kind free resource guide for farmers that outlines core USDA programs aimed at serving sustainable producers. It is available in Farm Service Agency offices nationwide and online. This important new resource will help break down information silos and ensure producers – particularly beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers who often have less access to resources – have access to clear, simple guidance on an array of programs that can help them improve the sustainability and success of their enterprises.**
- **Ensuring grassroots voices are heard in Washington, DC is central to our work. In 2016, NSAC worked with our members to coordinate four farmer "fly-ins". Fly-ins enable us to bring a diverse cohort of leaders – farmers, ranchers, and researchers – directly into the halls of Congress. This year we worked with folks from Alabama, California, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New York, Oregon, and Wisconsin. Fly-ins have concrete impact! By sharing their story about how investing in cover crops increased their farm's profits and reduced soil loss, an Iowa farm couple from helped us make the case that Congress should protect programs that help farmers enhance on-farm conservation. Similarly, a dairy farmer from Wisconsin was able to share her story of how business planning assistance from a federal grant helped her family farm diversify into ice cream production – the business now employs dozens and helped Wisconsin legislators connect the dots between a small federal investment and real, sustainable job growth in rural communities.**



A photograph of a cornfield at sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the rows of green corn plants. Large white numbers are overlaid on the image, separated by a vertical line. The text is as follows:

2016 FLY-INS
BY THE
NUMBERS

FLY-INS	HILL MEETINGS WITH FARMERS AND RANCHERS
4	44
PARTICIPANTS	MEETINGS WITH FARMERS, RANCHERS, AND THE WHITE HOUSE
23	4

4 FLY-INS

23

PARTICIPANTS

44

HILL
MEETINGS
WITH
FARMERS
AND
RANCHERS

4

MEETINGS
WITH FARMERS,
RANCHERS,
AND THE WHITE
HOUSE

COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

NSAC affirms that racial equity – an understanding and acknowledgement of historical and ongoing racial inequities and a commitment to actions challenging those inequities – is a core tenet of our coalition's outlook and will be embedded in its policy development and advocacy process.

Sustainable agriculture has been a long-standing practice in the communities of indigenous groups, migrants, and people of color. We believe that amplifying these voices is vital to building the power of the sustainable agriculture movement and increasing its influence on federal policy.

Recognizing the importance of building more diverse representation into our policy work, NSAC staff and members finalized a historical report of the 2008-2009 merger process between the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.



This report looks at key issues that arose during the merger - organizational model, membership criteria, and resource allocation - with the goal of understanding the merger's effects on racial diversity and equity within the coalition. Based on interviews with five leaders who were active members before, during, and after the merger, the report gives NSAC members historical knowledge of the coalition and context for our current racial equity work. The report also further explores themes of organizational vision, structure, and process as they relate to racial equity.

NSAC also worked to integrate a racial equity lens into our priority-setting process. Each January, NSAC member organizations vote on our coalition's policy priorities; this vote shapes our work for the year ahead. NSAC developed a guide for issue committees, with the goal of assessing the racial equity impact of existing and/or proposed policy priorities and preventing adverse consequences for historically marginalized racial or ethnic groups. This guidance will shape our policy priority decisions in 2017 and beyond.

In 2016, NSAC's Diversity Committee also identified a need for increased information flow between the Diversity Committee and the five Issue Committees. The Diversity Committee proposed identifying "liaisons" that can serve as point persons on racial equity. After crafting a list of responsibilities, five committee liaisons were identified in November. Their role will be two-fold: to report back to the Diversity Committee on their respective issue committee's work and to support the issue committees in utilizing NSAC's equity tools throughout the priority-setting process. NSAC will continue to develop this role throughout 2017.

NSAC continues to strengthen our relationships with networks and coalitions that advance racial equity in the food system, including: the Good Food For All collaborative, the Growing Food and Justice Initiative, and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS). To continue reaching broader stakeholders and networks, NSAC introduced targeted Spanish language content into our social media, and also listed additional foreign language publications and resources onto our website.

Finally, in 2016 NSAC introduced a scholarship program in memory of Ms. Cynthia Hayes, former director of Southeastern African American Farmers' Organic Network. Hayes was a founder of the first network for African American organic farmers in the US and an inspirational force in the development of NSAC's equity platform and initiatives that followed. She helped NSAC build efforts to increase opportunities for young leaders of color in the sustainable food and agriculture movement. This scholarship will be supported through NSAC's Diversity Fund and will be awarded to a MANRRS student in 2017.

SELECT PRESS

Agri-Pulse
Agri-View
Beginning Farmers
Brownfield Ag News
Capital Press
Civil Eats
Cornucopia
DTN/The Progressive Farmer
E&E News
Feed Stuffs
The Herald Standard
High Plains Journal
Huffington Post
Inside Climate News
Lancaster Farming
Lucky Peach
Madison County Courier
Marion Nestle's FoodPolitics.com
Morning Ag Clips
Mother Earth News
Mother Jones
National Public Radio (NPR)
New Food Economy
The New York Times
The Packer
Politico
VICE
Washington Post





THE ORGANIZATIONAL COUNCIL

The affairs of NSAC are governed by the Organizational Council. Along with the NSAC Managing Director, the Organizational Council establishes the NSAC mission, oversees strategic planning and development, evaluates NSAC's effectiveness, and provides financial oversight and approval of the annual budget. The Organizational Council also approves membership applications to NSAC. Nominated and elected by both Represented and Participating Members, Organizational Council members serve two-year terms and meet monthly.

The members of the Organizational Council are:

Eowyn Corral
Dakota Rural Action

Brian Depew
Center for Rural Affairs

Faye Jones, Chair
Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

Roland McReynolds
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

Jeanne Merrill
California Climate Action Network

Qiana Mickie
Just Food

Michelle Napier-Dunnings
Michigan Food and Farming Systems

Pam Roy, Treasurer
Farm to Table New Mexico Food and
Agriculture Policy Council

Ricardo J. Salvador, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Union of Concerned Scientists

Brise Tencer, Secretary
Organic Farming Research Foundation

Lydia Villanueva
C.A.S.A. del Llano

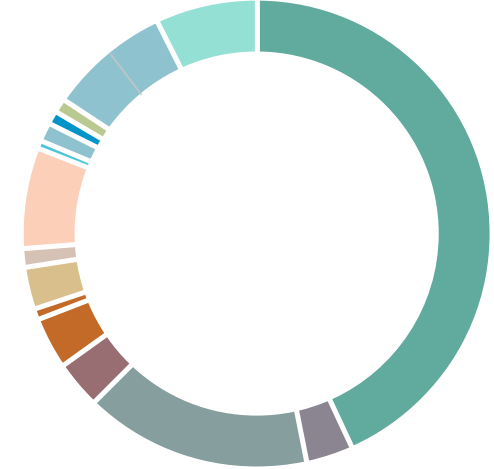
INCOME STATEMENT



Revenue and Support

Donations	\$70,136
Grants Revenue	\$1,249,241
Membership Dues	\$100,918
Registrations	\$83,972
Interest & Dividend Income	\$6,882
Other Income	\$63,281

Total Revenue and Support **\$1,574,430**



Expenses

Salaries	\$765,913
Temporary Salaries	\$55,419
Benefits	\$271,227
Consultations and Professional Services	\$61,476
Grants and Subcontracts	\$60,517
Registrations and Staff Development	\$11,787
Travel	\$53,518
Travel Scholarships	\$21,069
Meeting Expenses	\$122,977
Insurance	\$1,481
Printing	\$6,314
Publications/Subscriptions	\$24,101
Phone/Internet	\$15,224
Postage	\$915
Office Expense	\$17,501
Occupancy	\$145,048
Miscellaneous	\$626
Administrative	\$123,907

Total Expenses **\$1,759,020**

OUR TEAM

STAFF

Alyssa Charney
Policy Specialist

Jeremy Emmi
Managing Director

Emma Ertinger
Operations Coordinator

Shavaun Evans
Grassroots Advocacy Coordinator (2016)

Greg Fogel
Policy Director

Kanika Gandhi
Policy Specialist

Sarah Hackney
Grassroots Director

Ferd Hoefner
Senior Strategic Advisor

Wes King
Policy Specialist

Reana Kovalcik
Associate Director for
Communications and Development

Sophia Kruszewski
Senior Policy Specialist

Marla Karina Larrave
Grassroots Advocacy Coordinator (2017)

Juli Obudzinski
Deputy Policy Director

Paul Wolfe
Senior Policy Specialist



2016 INTERNS AND FELLOWS

Bilkis Bharucha
D'Andre Garrison
Lauren Humpert
Caitlin Joseph
Altinay Karasapan
Satoko Kato
Pallavi Sherikar
Courtney Weber

NSAC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

REPRESENTED MEMBERS

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association *Salinas, CA*
 Alternative Energy Resources Organization *Helena, MT*
 CCOF *Santa Cruz, CA*
 California FarmLink *Santa Cruz, CA*
 C.A.S.A. del Llano (Communities Assuring a Sustainable Agriculture) *Hereford, TX*
 Catholic Rural Life *St. Paul, MN*
 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*
 Farmer-Veteran Coalition *Davis, CA*
 Florida Organic Growers *Gainesville, FL*
 FoodCorps *Portland, OR*
 GrassWorks *New Holstein, WI*
 Hmong National Development, Inc. *St. Paul, MN and Washington, DC*
 Illinois Stewardship Alliance *Springfield, IL*
 Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy *Minneapolis, MN*
 Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative *Sebastopol, CA*
 Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation *Des Moines, IA*
 Izaak Walton League of America *St. Paul, MN and Gaithersburg, MD*
 Kansas Rural Center *Topeka, KS*



The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture *Poteau, OK*
 Land Stewardship Project *Minneapolis, MN*
 MAFO *St. Cloud, MN*
 Michael Fields Agricultural Institute *East Troy, WI*
 Michigan Food & Farming Systems – MIFFS *East Lansing, MI*
 Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance *Lansing, MI*
 Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service *Spring Valley, WI*
 Montana Organic Association *Eureka, MT*
 The National Center for Appropriate Technology *Butte, MT*
 National Hmong American Farmers *Fresno, CA*
 Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society *Ceresco, NE*
 Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance *Deerfield, MA*
 Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society *LaMoure, ND*
 Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides *Eugene, OR*
 Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association *Columbus, OH*
 Oregon Tilth *Corvallis, OR*
 Organic Farming Research Foundation *Santa Cruz, CA*
 Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA *Pittsboro, NC*
 Union of Concerned Scientists Food and Environment Program *Cambridge, MA*
 Virginia Association for Biological Farming *Lexington, VA*
 Wild Farm Alliance *Watsonville, CA*
 Women, Food, and Agriculture Network *Ames, IA*
 World Farmers *Lancaster, MA*

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Agrarian Trust *Nationwide*
 Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network *Montgomery, AL*
 Angelic Organics Learning Center *Caledonia, IL*
 Berkeley Food Institute *Berkeley, CA*
 California Climate and Agriculture Network *Sebastopol, CA*
 Carolina Farm Stewardship Association *Pittsboro, NC*
 Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems – University of Wisconsin *Madison, WI*
 Center for a Livable Future – Johns Hopkins University *Baltimore, MD*
 Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems, Oregon State University *Corvallis, OR*
 Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources – Washington State University *Puyallup, WA*
 Central Appalachian Network *Asheville, NC*
 Certified Naturally Grown *Brooklyn, NY*
 The Common Market *Philadelphia, PA*
 Community Farm Alliance *Berea, KY*
 Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship *Medford, WI*
 Dirigo Food Safety *Yarmouth, ME*
 Fair Food Network *Ann Arbor, MI*
 Family Farm Defenders *Madison, WI*
 Farm Aid *Cambridge, MA*
 Farm to Table – New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council *Santa Fe, NM*
 Farmers Market Coalition *Kimberton, PA*
 Food Action *Seattle, WA*
 Food Animal Concerns Trust *Chicago, IL*
 Friends of Family Farmers *Salem, OR*
 Future Harvest – CASA (Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture) *Fairplay, MD*
 Georgia Organics *Atlanta, GA*
 Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities (formerly Michigan Land Use Institute) *Traverse City, MI*
 Growing Power, Inc *Milwaukee, WI and Chicago, IL*
 Heifer USA *Little Rock, AR*
 The Humane Society of the United States *Washington, DC*
 Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT) Ohio State University *Columbus, OH*
 Iowa Environmental Council *Des Moines, IA*
 Island Grown Initiative *Vineyard Haven, MA*
 Just Food *New York, NY*
 La Montañita Cooperative *Albuquerque, NM*
 Land for Good *Keene, NH*
 Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture – Iowa State University *Ames, IA*
 LiveWell Colorado *Denver, CO*
 Maine Farmland Trust *Belfast, ME*
 Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association *Unity, ME*
 Michigan Farmers Market Association *East Lansing, MI*
 Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture – University of Minnesota *St. Paul, MN*
 Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network *Oxford, MS*
 Missouri Coalition for the Environment *St. Louis, MO*
 MSU Center for Regional Food Systems *East Lansing, MI*
 National Farm to School Network *Chicago, IL*
 National Young Farmers Coalition *Hudson, NY*
 Nebraska Wildlife Federation *Lincoln, NE*
 New England Farmers Union *Turner Falls, MA*
 Northeast Organic Farming Association – Interstate Council *NY, MA, RI, VT, CT, NH, NJ*
 Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing, Inc. *Brussels, WI*
 Organic Valley *LaFarge, WI*
 Partners for Rural America *Nationwide*
 PCC Farmland Trust *Seattle, WA*
 Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture *Millheim, PA*
 Pesticide Action Network North America *Oakland, CA*
 Powder River Basin Resource Council *Sheridan, WY*
 Practical Farmers of Iowa *Ames, IA*
 Renewing the Countryside *Minneapolis, MN*
 Republic Food Enterprise Center *Republic, PA*
 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*
 Sustainable Food Center *Austin, TX*
 Tilth Alliance *Seattle, WA*
 Wallace Center – Winrock International *Arlington, VA*
 West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition *Charleston, WV*
 Wholesome Wave *Bridgeport, CT*
 The Xerces Society *Portland, OR*

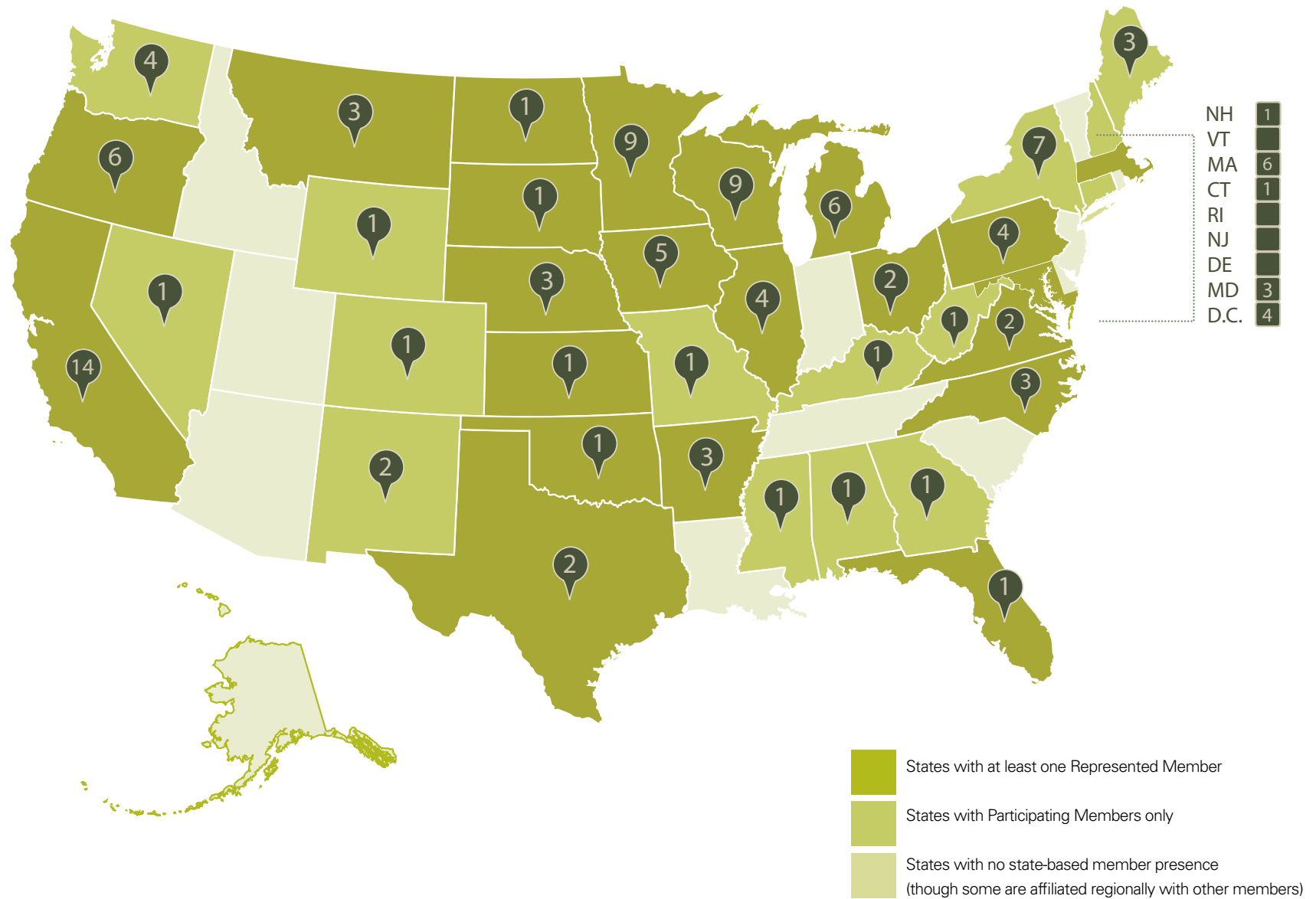
AFFILIATED REGIONAL PROGRAMS

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

SUPPORTERS

The 11th Hour Project
 Allagash Brewing Company
 Agua Fund, Inc.
 Annie's Homegrown
 The Boston Foundation
 Cedar Tree Foundation
 Clif Bar Family Foundation
 The Convergence Partnership
 Farm Aid
 Fidelity Charitable Services
 Firedoll Foundation
 Gaia Fund
 Howe Family Fund
 Janelia Foundation
 Johnson Family Foundation
 The W.K. Kellogg Foundation
 Henry P. Kendall Foundation
 La Quercia
 The John Merck Fund
 The McKnight Foundation
 New Venture Fund
 The North Pond Foundation
 Orfalea Foundation
 Organic Valley
 The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
 Panta Rhea Foundation
 Patagonia
 Rising Tide Brewing Company
 RZ Foundation
 Seattle Foundation
 Shine Craft Vessel Co.
 Tide Mill Creamery
 Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund
 UNFI Foundation
 Wallace Genetic Foundation, Inc.
 The Walton Family Foundation
 Anonymous (x2)

OUR MEMBERSHIP



ACRONYMS GLOSSARY

ACEP – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
AFRI – Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
BFRDP – Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
CNR – Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, or the Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization
CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program
FDA – Food and Drug Administration
FMLFPP – Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program
FNS – Food and Nutrition Service
FSMA – Food Safety Modernization Act
FSOP – Food Safety Outreach Program
NFSN – National Farm to School Network
NIFA – National Institute of Food and Agriculture
NOCCSP – National Organic Certification Cost Share Program
NSAC – National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
RMA – Risk Management Agency
SARE – Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program
SCMP – Specialty Crop Multi-State Program
SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
VAPG – Value-Added Producer Grant
WFRP – Whole-Farm Revenue Protection
WIC – Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children





The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is an alliance of over 100 grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities.

110 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 209
Washington, DC 20002
202-547-5754 phone
202-547-1837 fax
sustainableagriculture.net



**NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE
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