

April 21, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Heinrich, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Hoeven, and Ranking Member Bishop:

We are writing in support of \$30 million for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), within the Conservation Technical Assistance section of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 appropriation.

Grazing-based farm and ranch operations improve the profitability for producers across the nation. Grass-based agriculture is an important strategy for introducing new farmers and ranchers into livestock management because they can be low upfront-capital operations that nonetheless generate good income. Well managed grazing of livestock can help new and established farmers and ranchers alike thrive and stay in their rural communities.

Effectively managed grasslands also protect water quality, improve soil health, and provide a good habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Operations that keep cover on the ground year-round increase water retention and reduce the impacts of flooding.

Maximizing the benefits of well-managed grazing lands takes knowledge and skill. Grazing planning, technical assistance and peer-to-peer education are important. Counties with dedicated grazing staff and strong farmer networks show marked increases in the use of rotational or prescribed grazing and other beneficial grazing practices.

The key missing piece is robust national funding for technical assistance, training, and outreach. We are enormously grateful that after a hiatus in GLCI funding of over a dozen years, your subcommittees started the job of restoring funding and bringing GLCI back to life in the FY 2022 appropriations bill, and that support for GLCI continued in FY 2023. To build on those investments and the value they bring to grazers, we urge you to now appropriate \$30 million for FY 2024 to restore the program's historic funding levels and ensure that farmers and ranchers in all states receive the technical help that is needed for positive outcomes.

We request that you support \$30 million in funding for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative for FY 2024.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
American Sustainable Business Network
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Farm Action Fund
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)
Rural Coalition
Society for Range Management
Wallace Center at Winrock International - Pasture Project
World Wildlife Fund

Regional Organizations

Mississippi River Network
Northeast Organic Farming association – Interstate Council
Oregon Tilth

Farmers and Ranchers

Sweet Ring Farm, LLC - CT
Kenneth Mcghee, Farmer - GA
Poteete's Farm - GA
Whitley Farm - GA
Copeland's Living Waters Farms - GA
White Gates Farm - GA
The Garlic eScape Farm – IL
Jubilee Farm – KS
Schenker Family Farms, Inc. - KS
Highland Fields Farm – ME
Woods Farm – ME
Waterhouse Farm – ME
The Milkhouse – ME
Pleasant Pond Poultry Farm – ME
Fresh Acres Farm – MN
Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed - MN
Homochitto Goat Farms – MS
Gus's Farm - NH
Clean Fork Farm – NM
Jones Corona Ranch, LLC – NM
Persimmon Moon Farm – NM
Synergia Ranch – NM
Teresa Seamster, Rancher – NM
Cobblestone Valley Farm – NY
Chestnut Woods Farm – NC
Chutzpah Hollow – NC
Coleman Girls Farm – NC
Varty Ranch – ND
Country Sunshine Farm – OK
Moomaw Family Farm - OR
Persnickety Farm, LLC – PA
Dry Creek Livestock - TX
Sly Fox Farm – VT
Bean Hollow Grassfed – VA
ShireFolk Farm – VA
Withywindle Valley Farm – WA
Straight Forward Farm – WI
Three Fawn Meadows Farm – WI
Brattset Family Farm – WI
Dodge view Farms – WI
High Meadow Farm – WI
Little Sugar River Farm – WI
Rock Ridge Regenerative Graziers – WI
Paine Family Farm – WI
Genesis Acres – WI
1 Dr. Acres Farm – WI
Little Red Farms – WI

State Based Organizations

Alabama

Alabama State Association of Cooperatives

Georgia

McIntosh Sustainable Environment and
Economic Development
Square O Consulting, LLC
AgriUnity

Illinois

Illinois Stewardship Alliance

Iowa

Practical Farmers of Iowa
Soil and Water Conservation Society

Kansas

Kansas Rural Center
Kansas Farmers Union

Maine

Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardener's
Association
Maine Organic Milk Producers

Maryland

Waterkeepers Chesapeake – Fair Farms
Initiative

Massachusetts

Community Involved in Sustaining
Agriculture (CISA)
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

Michigan

Michigan Food & Farming Systems
(MIFFS)
Groundwork Center for Resilient
Communities

Minnesota

Friends of the Mississippi River
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Land Stewardship Project
MN Grazing Lands Conservation
Association
Green Lands Blue Waters
Renewing the Countryside

Mississippi

Unlimited Community Agricultural
Cooperative

Missouri

Cultivate Kansas City

Montana

Norther Plains Resource Council

Nebraska

Green Cover Seed

New Hampshire

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
New Hampshire

New Jersey

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
New Jersey

New Mexico

Holistic Management International
Farm To Table – New Mexico
New Mexico food & Agriculture Policy
Council
New Mexico Healthy Soils Working Group
Quivira Coalition
TseAlnaozti'i Farmers & Northern New
Mexico Indigenous Farmers, Inc.

New York

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
New York
New York State Grazing Association
Catskill Mountainkeeper

North Dakota

North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition
Foundation for Agricultural and Rural
Resource Management and Sustainability
(FARRMS)

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Association of Conservation
Districts
Oklahoma Conservation Commission Soil
Health Team
Oklahoma Grazing Lands Coalition

Oregon

Oregon Climate and Action Network

Pennsylvania

PASA Sustainable Agriculture

Rhode Island

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
Rhode Island

Vermont

Rural Vermont
Northeast Organic Farming Association of
Vermont

Virginia

Virginia Association for Biological Farming

Wisconsin

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship
Driftless Area Land Conservancy
Glacierland Resource Conservation &
Development Council, Inc.
Kirsten Jurcek, Resource Conservationist
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
River Alliance of Wisconsin
GrassWorks, Inc.
Savanna Institute
River Country RC&D
Wisconsin Land & Water
Marbleseed
Nofence – Sales and Market USA