

Advancing Equity and Climate Action in a New Food and Farm Bill

Recommendations for Congress

Cosponsor the Justice for Black Farmers Act (JBFA) and Agriculture Resilience Act (ARA), two marker bills that would help the next food and farm bill address the climate crisis and racial injustice.

Our food and farm system is harming its workers and our environment

Over decades, the US food and farm system has been taken over by industrial agriculture corporations. Today's system uses enormous amounts of chemical pesticides and fertilizers to grow the same crops year after year, damaging our soil, water, air, and climate. The system also harms the workers it depends on, through low pay and dangerous conditions. And it constrains the choices of consumers, many of whom lack affordable access to healthy food. Federal policies have enabled a few giant corporations to benefit most from the system, at everyone else's expense.

“The next farm bill can meet the climate crisis head on by investing in research, technical assistance, and support to make farmers and ranchers more resilient and part of the climate solution.”

— **Karen Perry Stillerman**
Deputy Director
UCS Food and Environment Program

A new food and farm bill can address these issues

We need Congress to pass a farm bill that transforms our food and farm system into one that addresses the climate crisis immediately and directly, and that centers racial justice.

In 2023, Congress has an opportunity and an obligation to build a more healthy, resilient, and equitable food and farm system through a new bill. Such a bill should protect farmers and the food supply by breaking up huge monopolies so that we are not dependent on just a few food producers. It should protect our soil so it stays fertile. It should protect the millions of workers who grow our food but often endure terrible conditions and receive extremely low pay, especially if they are people of color. It should protect our air and water and help farmers be part of the climate solution. It should protect consumers by shifting subsidies and incentives to encourage the growth of more nutritious food crops, such as fruits and vegetables.

Members of Congress have recently introduced two marker bills that would move the next food and farm bill in the right direction. These bills currently need cosponsors in the House and Senate.

Invest in climate resilience for our farm and food systems

The **Agriculture Resilience Act (ARA)** provides an evidence-based road map for supporting farmers and ranchers amid a changing climate and increasingly extreme weather events. This bill would dramatically increase investments in key US Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs that support proven—but underfunded—conservation, technical assistance, and research programs. The bill would also create new initiatives to make farm soils healthier and less vulnerable to flooding and drought, render farm soils more capable of capturing carbon, develop sustainable sources of on-farm energy, and reduce food waste. In addition, the bill would quadruple investments in federal food and agriculture research, with a focus on agroecology—a field of science that treats farms like ecosystems and can help farmers be more resilient, productive, and profitable for the long term.

Support and protect Black farmers

The **Justice for Black Farmers Act (JBFA)** brings equity for Black farmers into the food and farm bill. In 1920, there were nearly 1 million Black farmers in the United States. Today, because of the history of discrimination, fewer than 50,000 Black farmers are estimated to remain. Black farmers lost land worth \$326 billion during the twentieth century. Furthermore, those who still farm have, on average, smaller farms with lower sales. While Black farmers have received some support through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, equity must be codified in the new food and farm bill. The JBFA would enact policies to end discrimination within the USDA, protect the remaining Black farmers from losing their land, provide land grants to create a new generation of Black farmers and restore the dwindling land base, and implement systemic efforts to help family farmers across the nation.

“Legislation addressing the systemic exclusion of socially disadvantaged groups, especially Black people, from the benefits of the US food and farming system is a first step towards creating an equitable farming future.”

— **Omanjana Goswami**
Interdisciplinary Scientist
UCS Food and Environment Program

Cosponsor the JBFA and ARA to strengthen the next farm bill

- **Cosponsor the Justice for Black Farmers Act (JBFA).**
- **Contact the offices of Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME) to cosponsor the Agriculture Resilience Act (ARA).**