

## Climate Scientists' Letter to the American Farm Bureau

January 7, 2010

Mr. Bob Stallman, President  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
600 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Mr. Stallman:

As scientists concerned about the grave risks that climate change poses to the world and U.S. agriculture, we are disappointed that the American Farm Bureau has chosen to officially deny the existence of human-caused climate change when the evidence of it has never been clearer. Because the agriculture community has much to lose and gain based on the actions our nation takes to address climate change, we request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the latest climate science and your organization's official climate change [position](#).

A few weeks ago, 18 national science organizations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Meteorological Society, and the Crop Sciences Society of America, sent a [letter](#) to the U.S. Senate stating that "human activities are the primary driver" of climate change and that "contrary assertions are inconsistent with an objective assessment of the vast body of peer-reviewed science."

These organizations are the latest to join with nearly every other major scientific institution and professional society around the world, including the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in concluding that human activity is causing global warming.

Last June, the United States Global Climate Research Project, a collaboration of 13 federal agencies, released a new climate [assessment](#) that stated, "global warming is unequivocal and primarily human-induced. Global temperature has increased over the past 50 years. This observed increase is due primarily to human-induced emissions of heat-trapping gases." William Hohenstein, the director of the Global Change Program at the Department of Agriculture, recently stated that climate change "is going to have profound effects on agriculture and forests around the world."

A key finding from the federal assessment is that the agricultural benefits of a longer growing season and higher carbon dioxide levels will be more than offset by the impacts of unabated climate change. Those impacts include more frequent heat waves that reduce crop yields and stress livestock, more numerous heavy rainfall events that prevent spring planting and flood fields, and more widespread pest and weed infestations that require costly pesticides and herbicides to keep them in check. The report also found that faster evaporation rates and more sustained droughts would reduce water supplies vital to agriculture in the plains states and the west.

Climate change is already changing our world. According to the National Climatic Data Center (NOAA), the ten hottest years on record (since comprehensive temperature records began in 1880) have all occurred since 1990. Even though this year has been relatively cool in some parts of the United States, 2009 is on track to be the 6<sup>th</sup> warmest year on record in terms of global average temperature, and this decade will be the warmest on record.

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While it is true that Earth experiences natural warming and cooling cycles, scientists have accounted for these cycles in their analyses and in their models of the physics, chemistry, and biology affecting the Earth's climate system. The evidence clearly shows that the primary cause of the observed warming in recent decades is a result of increased concentrations of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere, which come from human activity.

Given this vast scientific consensus on climate change, we are disappointed that the American Farm Bureau has taken the inaccurate and marginalized stance that "there is no generally agreed upon scientific assessment on the exact impact or extent of carbon emissions from human activities, their impact on past decades of warming or how they will affect future climate changes."

Your organization's position does not reflect the consensus opinion of the science community or the scientific literature. Your stance represents the position taken by a relatively small number of climate change deniers, whose opinions and misrepresentations of the scientific data are typically not published in peer-reviewed scientific literature, but are instead shared in arenas that are not subject to rigorous scientific review.

The need to take climate change action is more urgent than ever. The latest science indicates that many climate impacts are happening faster than previously projected. Fortunately, we can still avoid the worst consequences if we take action soon. With that in mind, we hope to meet with you in the next few weeks to discuss this important matter.

Dr. Wuebbles will contact you soon about scheduling a meeting.

Sincerely,

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## Climate Scientists' Letter to the American Farm Bureau

The original signers have been joined by the following scientists with expertise in relevant disciplines of climate science:

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