

LAND CORE

Advancing soil health policies & programs
that create value for farmers, businesses,
and communities.

The Fight for American Food & Farmer Independence

The war in Ukraine and rising energy prices have highlighted the extent to which our current food production system is trapping farmers in a cycle of dependency. Record high input costs¹, especially for fertilizers, are being driven both by rising energy prices (fertilizers and other inputs rely heavily on cheap fuel to be produced²) and by global supply chain shortages (we import a significant percentage of those fertilizers and other inputs, many from Russia and Belarus³).

This globalized system has been supported by US government policy for decades⁴, and has disastrous consequences that can no longer be ignored. It not only limits the independence of our farmers and ranchers, but also compromises America's ability to produce food, which is fundamentally a national security issue.

The current responses, to increase subsidies⁵ (shifting the burden on to taxpayers) and increase access to US-made fertilizers⁶ (still directly tied to the cost of energy), are band-aid solutions at best, and fail to lessen our dependence on synthetic inputs and global energy markets. Additionally, these chemically intensive systems can severely degrade our soils, reducing long term soil fertility, further perpetuating a cycle of dependency.^{7 8 9}

Regenerative agriculture is the long-term solution to this crisis.

When farmers adopt regenerative soil health practices like no-till, cover crops, diverse rotations, and managed grazing, they can significantly reduce fertilizer use^{10 11 12} (and in some cases eliminate its use altogether¹³). These changes also can increase yields¹⁴, improve farm profitability¹⁵, revive rural economies, and build resilience to the impacts of a changing climate (such as flood and drought).^{16 17}

Our government needs to establish a path forward to give our farmers the tools to transition away from the current dependency system it has created, and towards an independent, regenerative, soil health-focused American agriculture.

Fighting for regenerative agriculture is fighting for *the freedom of American farmers.*

US farmers and ranchers from across the country are calling for our government to support a swift, nationwide transition to regenerative agriculture and rebuild our eroding soil health in the upcoming Farm Bill.¹⁸ Producers are asking policymakers to remove prohibitive regulations and perverse incentives in the crop insurance programs, significantly increase the funding for conservation programs and technical assistance, invest in and de-regulate regional processing infrastructure, along with other key improvements.¹⁹

Our farmers can free the American food system from the endless sway of global markets and impacts of geopolitical tensions, while saving taxpayer dollars and producing healthy food for our communities. But they need our support to do it.

Citations:

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