

AFT's Agriculture & Environment Campaign

AS THE SINGLE LARGEST USER of land and water resources in America, agriculture has a significant impact on the nation's environment. But agriculture also provides one of the most cost-effective ways of addressing two of the nation's most pressing environmental challenges: water quality and climate change. As a result, there is an enormous opportunity for farmers and ranchers to play a major role in improving the environment while expanding their own sources of revenue. American Farmland Trust's new *Agriculture & Environment Campaign* will help farmers and ranchers address these issues and realize the huge economic opportunity of "producing environmental benefits" in addition to food, fuel and fiber.



Agriculture's Role in Improving Water Quality



Improved agricultural practices are among the most cost-effective measures for reducing water quality degradation. But not enough is being done, with U.S. agriculture remaining an important contributor to water quality degradation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service estimates that 829 million acres (80 percent of our croplands, pasturelands and rangelands) need improved conservation practices to prevent nutrients and pesticides from reaching waterways. Two-thirds of coastal waterways are degraded by nutrient pollution, which in many areas primarily is caused by nitrogen runoff from agriculture. Farmers want to be good stewards of the land, but they need policies and programs that help them produce environmental benefits and reward them when they do.





Agriculture's Role in Reducing Greenhouse Gases

U.S. agriculture can help to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by adopting new practices and technologies and by producing low-carbon renewable energy. Studies indicate that changes in agricultural practices, paired with the foresting of marginal agricultural lands, could offset up to one-fifth of current U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. In the near term, carbon sequestration

projects on agricultural lands are the easiest and most readily available means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions on a meaningful scale. In the process, farmers, ranchers and rural communities stand to benefit from a growth in green jobs and eco-service markets. If a portion of mainstream agriculture is persuaded that "cap and trade" policies can be in their interest, this could help push climate change legislation forward.

We Have a Plan for Improving the Environment

AFT's *Agriculture & Environment Campaign* will help farmers and ranchers improve the environment through policy development and demonstration projects. The campaign strategy consists of five integrated parts:

- Engaging stakeholders, especially farmers, and building broad alliances
- Demonstrating successful approaches on-the-ground
- Developing policy proposals through research, analysis and input from stakeholders
- Cultivating political champions and advocating for legislative change
- Mobilizing supporters in key districts and states through communications and outreach

For water quality improvement, AFT will implement a mix of demonstration projects in key watersheds across the country, focusing on Pennsylvania, California, Minnesota, Ohio and Washington. We will implement projects on-the-ground with farmers to increase the adoption of conservation practices and to develop effectively functioning nutrient trading systems. We will engage stakeholders in the design and development of public and private markets for ecosystem services provided by well-managed farms; identify constraints and create solutions to allow these markets to thrive; and develop support and leadership within agriculture. The projects have the potential to expand dramatically to get to scale and achieve significant, measurable environmental improvements in water quality.



For climate change, AFT will actively engage agriculture leaders and other stakeholders in the development of federal climate change legislation to maximize the participation of farmers and ranchers in reducing greenhouse gases. AFT will ensure that land use and changes in farming practices be part of the solutions in any federal climate change program. We will establish a network of agriculture "influencers" in key states to support federal policy change, and we will work with



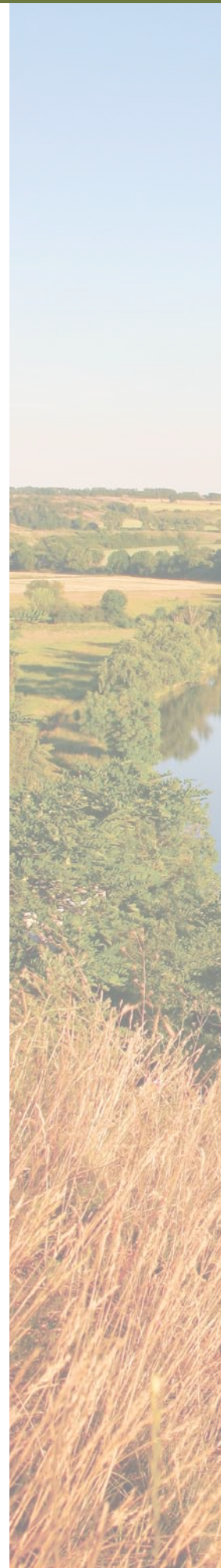
farmers to develop policy recommendations on the critical issues affecting agriculture. Specifically, we will convene a series of working group sessions with leaders from agriculture, the environment, academia and federal agencies and produce background analyses on the key issues facing agriculture. This will result in a set of policy recommendations that maximize agriculture's participation and ensure maximum greenhouse gas reductions while maintaining a strong farm economy.

Success Means a Cleaner Environment and More Viable Farms

AFT seeks to achieve significant improvements in our nation's environmental quality. Our ambitious, five-year goals entail improving water quality attributable to agriculture by 10 to 20 percent in our project areas and developing detailed plans for scaling up. They also entail mitigating or reducing five percent of overall U.S. greenhouse gas emissions through changes in agricultural practices, while maintaining an economically sustainable agricultural sector. To achieve these goals, we will demonstrate that by helping farmers make money "selling" cleaner water, cleaner air and wildlife habitat, we improve farm viability and our environment.

As a result of AFT's Agriculture & Environment Campaign, we will:

- Secure rules and funding that effectively implement the 2008 Farm Bill programs;
- Develop transferable nutrient trading systems at the watershed-, state- and interstate-level that maximize the participation of farmers and ranchers to improve water quality;
- Develop a transferable program to dramatically increase adoption rates of the best conservation practices (called "BMPs" or "best management practices") and lay out strategy for rolling them out statewide;
- Enhance the development and passage of a federal "cap and trade" carbon trading system that maximizes the participation of farmers and ranchers to reduce greenhouse gases;
- Identify and promote the implementation of a suite of "best policy practices" at state and federal levels that help farmers improve water quality and reduce global warming; and,
- Build a voice for agriculture in support of agriculture conservation programs, nutrient trading systems and carbon cap and trade programs.



Engaging Farmers in Solutions

For nearly 30 years, AFT has been promoting farming practices that are environmentally responsible yet economically practical. Our efforts have earned us the respect of farmers and ranchers and their organizations. We have developed strong partnerships and relationships with key legislators and organizations, while convening mainstream agricultural organizations and environmental interests to bring about change at the local, state and national level.



In our recent farm bill campaign, AFT successfully engaged a broad spectrum of groups and divergent interests to forge common interests between mainstream agriculture and conservation. Our combined efforts resulted in a farm bill that took an important step forward in reforming farm policies while securing significantly increased funding for conservation. In the process, we favorably altered the political landscape and public debate for U.S. farm and food policy. The *Agriculture & Environment Campaign* will build off this success and its momentum.

