



CALIFORNIA FOOD & JUSTICE COALITION

2007 FARM BILL : FOOD JUSTICE

March 2007

CFJC is a coalition of more than 75 organizations working to rebuild regional food systems in California, increase access to high-quality fresh and healthy foods for all people and expand market opportunities for small and mid-sized farmers. We envision a food system where all activities, from farm to table, are equitable, healthful, regenerative and community-driven.

The members of the California Food and Justice Coalition support a new farm bill in 2007 that:

1. Invests in **local food systems** that strengthen social, economic and environmental ties between urban and rural communities. The purchase and distribution of regional foods encourages economic development, strengthens community food security and self-reliance and reduces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.
2. Increases **access to fresh, local, healthy and nutritious foods**, especially in limited resource communities of color, by creating new and expanded programs that help communities invest in retail markets, food based businesses and urban agriculture and increase access to farmers' markets, including for food stamp and WIC recipients.
3. Reduces **hunger** and improves **nutrition** by increasing investment and removing barriers to participating in food stamps, and increasing access to fruits and vegetables through food banks. Also, modernizes Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) to support comprehensive public approaches and community food security applications.
4. Reforms **commodity programs** that mostly benefit the largest and wealthiest farmers. New policies must limit and phase out commodity payments, protect farmer income and reinvest savings to benefit small and mid-sized farmers that are growing food to feed people. Low commodity prices create cheap animal feed that encourages destructive industrial production of livestock and cheap food additives that contribute to the obesity epidemic. U.S. commodity programs also compromise the food sovereignty of other nations, resulting in poverty and hunger.
5. Invests in **infrastructure and entrepreneurship** so small and mid-sized farmers can access new markets and meet the growing demand for local and sustainably grown food. Many beginning, minority and other small farmers are farming on the edge of cities that represent a huge market for CA specialty crop producers. New programs must provide funding and technical assistance to increase the processing, marketing and distribution of local food to meet this demand.
6. Promotes farming that **protects water, air, wildlife habitat, and farmland** by increasing funding and access to conservation programs. We must reward farmers who protect natural resources, animal habitat and bio-diversity, while holding polluters, such as factory farms, accountable to cleaning up their own mess without taxpayer dollars.
7. Invests in **research that supports sustainable, organic and regenerative agricultural** practices and technologies for the public good. Taxpayers' dollars must not be used to develop genetically engineered plants or other agricultural technologies that will be controlled by private for-profit corporations.
8. Protects **farm workers** by improving working conditions, reducing exposure to pesticides and other agriculture chemicals, increasing economic security and ensuring access to healthcare and housing.
9. Expands opportunities for **new and beginning farmers**, including youth, women, immigrants, and other farmers of color, by assisting them to access land, acquire farming resources and expand their farming and marketing skills.
10. Establishes an independent review process to ensure that USDA takes all necessary actions to resolve and remedy the harm and financial losses that led to the historic class action lawsuit filed against USDA by **African American farmers**, and inspired similar lawsuits by American Indian, Hispanic and woman farmers.
11. Ensure fair treatment and equal opportunity for all **minority farmers** by increasing access to credit, marketing, risk management, conservation and other programs that help farmers improve profitability and expand their operations.
12. Increases funding for **schools to purchase more fruits and vegetables**, including locally-grown, and increase flexibility for schools and the Department of Defense Fresh program to purchase local and regional foods.

www.CAFoodJustice.org

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2007 FARM BILL POLICY PRIORITIES

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CFJC supports a broad platform for reform in the 2007 Farm Bill. The following are priorities for linking rural and urban communities, rebuilding local food systems and increasing access to healthy foods for all people in California.

Support for local food system & regional food distribution

- Expand the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program to \$60 million and designate funds for projects that supply healthy local foods to underserved communities, including food retail, farm to cafeteria and urban agriculture projects.
- Increase funding for Value-Added Producer and Rural Business Enterprise and Opportunity Grants to increase market access through innovative marketing, distribution and business ventures. Prioritize projects benefiting small and mid-sized growers.
- Invest \$45 million in infrastructure pilot projects that enable farmers to serve local and regional markets, with priority given to limited-resource and social disadvantaged farmers working together to supply institutions and underserved communities.

Increasing Access to fresh, local & healthy foods in schools and communities

- Increase funding for the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and provide funds to support EBT use at farmers' markets to give all urban residents access to high quality, locally grown food and expand markets for local farmers.
- Allow geographic preferences and increased flexibility for schools and the DoD Fresh program to purchase local foods.
- Increase funding for the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs.
- Expand the Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Pilot Program to all 50 states.
- Fund the Farm to Cafeteria program to help schools link with local farms through food purchases and experiential nutrition and agricultural education through gardens, farm tours, cooking classes and other activities.
- Increase funding for schools to buy more fruits and vegetables through Specialty Crop Purchases and the DoD Fresh Program.

Expand Opportunities for beginning, new immigrant and minority farmers

- Fund the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program to provide farm credit financing to beginning farmers and ranchers.
- Establish Individual Development Accounts to support beginning farmers' ability to build assets for starting farm enterprises.
- Fully fund the Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program.
- Establish a process to provide relief to African American, and other socially disadvantaged farmers who have filed discrimination complaints and lawsuits against USDA.

Reducing hunger and improving nutrition for all

- Increase minimum food stamp benefits, Simplify the application process and extend eligibility to all who need food, including single adults and documented immigrants.
- Modernize Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) program to include comprehensive approaches that support community food security applications. Allow the programs to fully promote foods stamps and other federal food and nutrition programs.
- Increase funding for food banks to purchase, store and distribute healthy food, especially fresh produce.
- Reject the President's elimination of the Community Supplemental Food Program and instead expand it.

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