



Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the national coalition of Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal?

A. Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal is a bipartisan national coalition of rural and urban farmers and ranchers, and organizations that represent farmers and ranchers. Coalition members share a commitment and work together to advance food and agriculture policies that support organic, regenerative, agroecological and biodynamic food production and land-management practices.

Q. Why was the coalition formed?

A. The Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal coalition was formed for the purpose of ensuring that farmers and ranchers—not just corporate agribusiness lobbyists—have a voice in future agriculture-related policy reforms. The timing of the coalition’s formation coincided with the February 7, 2019, introduction of the Green New Deal Resolution which calls for a 10-year national mobilization to enact massive policy reforms to address, among other issues, global warming, income inequality, corporate monopolies and the lack of access to clean air, water and healthy food for millions of Americans.

Q. Why is the coalition focused on food and farming policy reforms?

A. Many of America’s small- and mid-scale farmers and ranchers, struggling to make ends meet, are at risk of losing farms that have been in their families for many generations. Rural communities are in economic decline. Industrial agriculture practices have led to widespread water and air pollution, soil erosion and degradation, food deserts, and public health crises related to the reckless and excessive use of antibiotics and the mass production of nutritionally deficient food. Current agriculture policies artificially prop up this system, which externalizes the real cost of producing “cheap” food, including the system’s harmful and costly impact on climate, the environment and human health. Yet these policies prevail and persist because powerful agribusiness corporations can afford to spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year lobbying Congress. Policies that would support family farms are closely aligned with policies that would achieve the goals laid out in the Green New Deal. For that reason, politics aside, the Green New Deal presents an unprecedented opportunity for farmers and ranchers whose practices provide social, economic and environmental benefits to demand reforms that will improve their prospects for financial success by leveling the playing field.

Q. What will members do to advance the coalition’s policy goals?

A. Coalition members will be invited to participate in any or all of these activities:

- Help build regional lobbying teams throughout the U.S. to build support for legislation that supports farmers and ranchers engaged in or transitioning to regenerative practices.
- Organize farm visits and training sessions for local and state lawmakers, and attend Congressional hearings and/or Capitol Hill briefings aimed at educating members of Congress about the potential of regenerative agriculture to draw down and sequester carbon, and revitalize rural economies.
- Help educate consumers and local media about the difference between good food and cheap food, and how regenerative farmers and ranchers can play a role in improving air, water and soil quality.
- Help build alliances with other coalition members in their regions, and with organizations in other sectors, including business, environmental, food, and climate, that also support the Green New Deal.
- Identify and build support for a new USDA secretary of agriculture who will represent the interests of the coalition, not multinational agribusiness corporations.

Q. How does the coalition fit into the Regeneration International network?

A. One of the most urgent questions facing the Regeneration Movement is, “How can we scale up regenerative farming, ranching and land-management practices in time to address the climate emergency?” Scaling up internationally will require a combination of consumer education and demand, farmer training and policy reform. In the U.S., up until the Green New Deal Resolution was introduced, food and farming policy reform was tied to the slow and onerous process of revisiting the U.S. Farm Bill once every five years. Fortunately, the Green New Deal has sparked a national conversation around the intersection of food, farming and climate. The Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal can seize this opportunity to lead that conversation so that it results in transformational, rather than incremental, change in the U.S.

Q. In addition to Regeneration International, who else is assisting in building the coalition?

A. Regeneration International (RI) was tapped by the Sunrise Movement to anchor the Farmers & Ranchers for a Green New Deal coalition. RI is also working with organizations like Family Farm Action, the Institute for Ag Trade & Policy, American Sustainable Business Coalition, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and others to build and support the coalition. The coalition also benefits from input provided by a dedicated Congressional Advisory Committee comprised of members of Congress who support the coalition’s goals and have agreed to assist in reviewing proposed legislation, organizing Congressional hearings and briefings and building support for key pieces of legislation.

Q. How can interested farmers, ranchers and organizations join the coalition?

A. To get involved, farmers, ranchers and organizations should sign this letter to Congress. All letter signers will be consulted on policy questions and USDA secretary nominations, and will be invited to help in education and lobbying efforts. In an effort to fairly represent the policy needs of all farmers engaged in regenerative practices, the coalition seeks to include members from all geographic areas of the U.S., and from all sectors of food and fiber production. The coalition also strives to achieve both gender and ethnic diversity.