



Farmers for Animals, Communities and the Environment

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Pasture-Based Farmers Rally Together Ahead of Farm Bill Debate, Call on Congress to Make Common Sense Reforms in Open Letter

Independent farmers unite to launch the FACE Ag Network, a new, nationwide network to combat systemic barriers and advocate for commonsense policy reforms that support pasture-based farms, animals' welfare, and rural community health

Washington D.C. — A new coalition of independent farmers has launched a first-of-its-kind network known as the FACE Ag Network ([Farmers for Animals, Communities and the Environment](#)), uniting the voices of pasture-based livestock and poultry producers from across the country. In an open letter to House and Senate leadership, the FACE Ag Network is urging Congress to create a level playing field for their businesses in the upcoming Farm Bill ([H.R. 7567](#)), outlining a policy platform focused on uplifting thousands of farmers and reinvigorating local economies across the nation.

With more than 130 farmer members and growing fast, the FACE Ag Network is a community of independent farmers and ranchers dedicated to building a more humane and sustainable food and farming system across the U.S. At a time when a handful of corporations and industry associations are dominating policy conversations in their efforts to prop up industrial farming, FACE is organizing farmers across the country to ensure that those who care for their animals, land and local communities have a real seat at the policymaking table.

“As someone farming in a state that has more pigs than people, it’s impossible to avoid the impact public policy has had on the agricultural landscape in Iowa, as well as the harm it’s causing our communities,” said Anna Pesek, a FACE Ag Network leader and co-owner of Over the Moon Farm in Iowa. “The consolidated industrial agriculture system we have now did not happen by accident; it was driven by decades of policy that incentivized and shaped it that way. The FACE Ag Network is here to drive better policies that incentivize higher-welfare, more resilient farming systems.”

“I’ve seen in my own state house what we’re able to achieve when farmers organize together,” said Mike Guebert, a FACE Ag Network leader and co-owner of Terra Farma in Oregon. “The FACE Ag Network can help us replicate those achievements across the country and help more farmers adopt and expand pasture-based, regenerative practices that can truly transform a piece of land- and the surrounding community- for the better.”

Leaders of the FACE Ag Network are calling on lawmakers to support commonsense farm policy reforms that would correct this power imbalance, ensure the viability of their businesses, and, in turn, bolster the strength of the nation’s food supply. They outlined three key priorities in the legislation: investing in federal funding programs that support the growth of local and regional food systems, reforming conservation spending to ensure it flows to meaningful conservation practices and safeguarding state animal protection laws that provide important market incentives for higher-welfare farming.

“When I retired from my military career, I knew I wanted to continue to serve my country somehow and providing humanely-raised, high-quality, healthy food to my community was an obvious choice,” said Ty Morgan, a FACE Ag Network leader and co-owner of Southern Sunny Acres farm in Texas alongside his wife Tokie Morgan. “Who feeds this nation matters, and lawmakers should put that responsibility in the hands of smaller-scale, sustainable and humane farmers like us.” Tokie Morgan added, “We hear loud and clear from our customers and other Texans that people want to know where their food comes from and they want to support local farmers who are raising animals more humanely, but our agricultural policies make it difficult for anyone other than the industrial operations to succeed.”

In their open letter to Congress released today, FACE Ag Network leaders sounded the alarm on agriculture in the United States being at a breaking point: since the last Farm Bill was passed in 2018, more than 158,000 farms have been lost due to farming policies that continue to put independent farms out of business and prop up consolidated, concentrated animal agriculture.

“Industrial animal agriculture is hollowing out our towns, poisoning our land and water, and stealing futures out from under farming families across the country,” FACE leaders wrote.

“I’ve been farming for over 20 years and despite building incredible networks locally and feeding thousands through our farm’s CSA, our national agricultural system hasn’t improved during that time frame,” said Jody Osmund, a FACE Ag Network leader and owner of Cedar Valley Sustainable Farm in Illinois. “The only way to turn the rudder of agriculture in this country is to change policy. We may not have the funding that industrial trade groups have, but the FACE Ag Network is building a community of farmers that, together, can challenge the money by being the many.”

The FACE Ag Network was formed to bring together the vast number of small farmers across the country to collectively organize and ensure that they have a voice at the policymaking table, and demonstrate to lawmakers that small farmers have the power to feed America. Ahead of the Farm Bill’s passage, the group has invited lawmakers to visit their farms and witness firsthand how pasture-based farming systems are building a more resilient food system and reinvigorating rural economies.

*“To make pasture-based, sustainable farming successful, we must show our lawmakers and country how it is done, and the foundational role we play in our communities,” said **Chris Muse, a FACE Ag Network leader and co-owner of Muse 3 Farms in Louisiana alongside his brothers.** “The FACE Ag Network marks the first coordinated national push from pasture-based farmers to bring our representatives out to the farms where we can show them our impact and weigh in on the policies we need to thrive.”*

*“The way we treat our animals and care for the soil directly impacts the quality of our food and our health, which is something our customers who come see the farm immediately understand,” said **Elizabeth Collins, a FACE Ag Network leader and owner of Graceful Acres Farm in New York.** “Pasture-based and regenerative farms like mine and like those operated by FACE members across the country are committed to providing our communities with healthy foods while stewarding our rural landscapes, and I encourage our political leaders to come learn what our customers already know.”*

Beyond policy, the FACE Ag Network also seeks to unite small and mid-sized farmers from across the country to combat the loneliness many farmers feel. Most farmers are spread out across rural areas and often don't know other farmers who have the same priorities and are facing the same challenges as them.

*“Small and mid-sized farms make up the majority of farms across the country, yet farmers often feel remote and isolated from one another,” said **Sharon Kay, FACE Ag Network leader and co-owner of Fawn Crossing Farms in Virginia alongside her husband Bill Theiss.** “It can be especially discouraging when it seems like your voice doesn't matter or that decision-makers aren't listening.” **Bill added,** “The FACE Ag Network gives us a space to come together, share our struggles, celebrate our victories, and feel less alone as we work towards building government policies that support our success and viability into the future.”*

The FACE Ag Network aims to build a national community of farmer leaders and members who serve as a key voice in shaping agricultural policy, including the Farm Bill, and advancing pragmatic, innovative state and local reforms. Through this work, the network is ensuring that independent farmers are leading the national conversation about the future of agriculture, starting with this legislation.

The FACE Ag Network is supported and organized by the [ASPCA®](#) (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) and [FACT](#) (Food Animal Concerns Trust), two organizations with long histories of partnering with pasture-based farmers. As supporting organizations, the ASPCA and FACT fund the infrastructure that makes the FACE Ag Network possible, while the vision and priorities are set by farmers based on their own experiences operating pastured-based farms.

*“As my personal farming journey has evolved from feeding my family to feeding my community, I have grown to depend on fellow pasture-based farmers,” said **Samantha Gasson, Humane Farming Program Director at FACT and co-owner of Bull City Farm in North Carolina.** “Through my work at FACT, I have seen how animal welfare has been sidelined as legislation privileges industrial farming techniques like*

animal confinement and pesticide usage, leaving pasture-based farmers feeling isolated and powerless. We're excited to help give a platform to humane farmers who are building a community committed to a better future for agriculture and meat production."

*"Our farm animal welfare program was founded on the belief that when the most humane farms thrive, animals benefit, and farmers in the FACE Ag Network are demonstrating every day that higher-welfare, pasture-based systems are a viable and necessary alternative to factory farming," **said Kara Shannon, director of farm animal welfare at the ASPCA.** "We know how stretched farmers are and we want the FACE Ag Network to make it as easy as possible for them to tell their powerful stories to policymakers and shift public investment toward the kind of humane and resilient farming that reflects our shared values."*

To learn more about Farmers for Animals, Communities & the Environment, [click here](#), and join the conversation on social media by following [@faceag](#) on Instagram or spread the word by sharing [this post](#) about the FACE Ag Network to encourage others to support pasture-based farmers. For more information or to set up interviews with FACE Ag Network Farmer Leaders, contact Alice Gottesman (alice.gottesman@berlinrosen.com or aspc@berlinrosen.com).

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