



OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND FARM ASSOCIATION 2023 FARM BILL PLATFORM

PROVIDING MORE SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING AND BIPOC FARMERS

OEFFA members believe that providing more support for beginning and BIPOC farmers should be a priority in the 2023 Farm Bill, so we can address our nation's current and historic inequities and build a robust and resilient food system for our future.

With nearly half of all U.S. farmland expected to change hands in the next two decades, now is the time to help historically underserved farmers get on the land and thrive in their businesses.



Beginning and BIPOC Farmers Face Structural Challenges

Starting and managing a successful farm is always fraught with challenges, but beginning and BIPOC farmers are disproportionately impacted by limited affordable farmland, lack of capital and financing, and difficulty accessing markets and infrastructure.

Land access is the top challenge reported by beginning and BIPOC farmers, and the leading reason they leave agriculture. Rising land prices, farmland consolidation, and urban development have put secure access to affordable farmland increasingly out of reach for many.

Additionally, **institutional racism has excluded BIPOC farmers** from access to land, financial resources, and information, which continues to shape US. farming and land ownership demographics.

Historically, beginning and BIPOC farmers have had difficulty accessing USDA programs. Immigrant and non-English speaking farmers, in particular, face language barriers and a lack of culturally trained staff at local field offices. Improved outreach and streamlined application processes are needed to make these programs more widely accessible.



Affordable Farmland Access

Accessing land and capital has been a key challenge for beginning farmer Jonathan Greer. **“As black farmers... we’re trying to break into this space to try and acquire some bit of land, so that we can build some type of farm and so we can leave a**



Jonathan and the Greer family have farmed vegetables and herbs for 3 years at Eden's Blessing Family Farm in Perry County, Ohio.

legacy for our children and then they can appreciate farming and then build upon what we've built.”

Greer has experienced challenges navigating federal farming programs. “When you're a beginning farmer... you don't know what you don't know. And so... sometimes you don't know what to ask for, what to look out for, and you kind of feel like you're alone and isolated.”

For beginning farmer Dana Hilfinger of Roots, Fruits, and Shoots Farm in Licking County, Ohio, farm bill programs have been essential.





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"NRCS EQIP cost-shares have enabled my farm to grow much faster than I otherwise could," she said. "The high tunnel and cover crop seeds I purchased through the program allowed me to offer more winter vegetables to my customers and improve the soil quality on my farm."

BEGINNING AND BIPOC FARMERS

Source: National Young Farmers Coalition 2022 Survey

54 percent of young farmers and 75 percent of Black farmers say they currently need more access to land

41 percent of young farmers and 59 percent of Black farmers say access to capital is "very or extremely challenging"

In 1910, there were almost 1 million Black farmers. Today, there are only about 45,000.

95 percent of U.S. farmers are White and 98 percent of farmland is White-owned



Investing in Next Generation Farmers

Beginning and underserved farmers using ecological practices to grow food for our communities should receive priority support in the 2023 Farm Bill.

The bill should improve equity, accessibility, and representation in USDA programs; incentivize farm transition to beginning farmers and prevent further land loss in communities of color; enhance technical assistance; increase direct financial assistance and access to credit, and invest in urban agriculture.

Key programs serving next generation farmers include the Farming Opportunities and Training and Outreach, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, and the Office of Urban Agriculture and its programs.



THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

The farm bill shapes virtually every aspect of the U.S. food and agricultural system. The 2023 Farm Bill is our single greatest opportunity to realize our vision for a future where sustainable and organic farmers thrive, local food nourishes our communities, and agricultural practices protect and enhance our environment.

Democracy belongs to all of us, and it's up to us to advocate for strong policies that benefit our whole community and the Earth. Your voice is needed to make sure government and public institutions are accountable and exercise their responsibility to protect our health and well-being and support natural ecosystems.

To join us in calling for farmer-focused solutions in the 2023 Farm Bill, including the key programs serving next generation and urban farmers, go to action.oeffa.com/farm-bill.

