



# 2023 FARM BILL "MARKER BILL"

SUPPORTED BY THE OHIO ECOLOGICAL FOOD AND FARM ASSOCIATION

## AGRIVOLTAICS RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION ACT OF 2023



**S. 1778**

**Sponsored by New Mexico Senator Martin Heinrich**

**The Agrivoltaics Research and Demonstration Act of 2023 would require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct research and establish demonstration sites to study agrivoltaic systems.**

On May 31, 2023, Senators Heinrich (D-NM) and Braun (R-IN) introduced the Agrivoltaics Research and Demonstration Act of 2023, a breakout piece of the Agriculture Resilience Act (ARA). The focus of this bill is for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Energy (DoE) to jointly focus on advancing research on agrivoltaics and demonstrations of the value of such systems. Specifically, the network leading this project would receive \$15 million per year for fiscal years 2024-2028.

Agrivoltaic systems combine solar panels with agricultural production. There are a few different examples of how they can be used:

- Grazing sheep or cattle under solar panels
- Growing vegetables around and under solar panels
- Growing pollinator-friendly plants with panels

**By adding solar panels to farmland, producers reap the benefits of producing their own energy without reducing their acres in production.**

Universities, states, and the federal government are all investing in agrivoltaics research and there is more to learn about how these systems can work in sustainable agriculture. Increased research has the potential to demonstrate how agrivoltaic systems support farmers positively contributing to the climate crisis while showing the potential economic stability of these investments. This marker bill would provide the resources necessary for the USDA to investigate how agrivoltaic systems can best meet the needs of different production systems and complement other USDA-funded on-farm projects.



Pictured: The agrivoltaic farm at Jack's Solar Garden (Sprout City Farms)



## OEFFA SUPPORTED MARKER BILLS

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- The use of agrivoltaic systems can help keep farmland in production, generate clean energy, and strengthen rural economies.
- Agrivoltaics helps producers diversify their income and increase the resilience of their operations.
- Agrivoltaic systems can help to decrease farm energy costs and/or allow producers to sell energy to the grid, helping to increase farm income.
- Incorporating solar panels into production systems can help to reduce water loss and irrigation requirements, improve crop yields and resistance to drought, and provide shade for livestock.
- Due to the local cooling effects of crops, solar panels placed above production systems will have reduced temperatures, making them more efficient.
- Increased research into agrivoltaic systems can help to determine the best designs for panels, how they will impact crop yields and soil moisture, and how panels can be harmonized with fencing and manure management.
- Ensuring that photovoltaic systems support the viability of productive farmland into the future is critical and this bill can help us do that.



## TALKING POINTS

