

25 U.S. Farmer Organizations #Still-In on the Paris Agreement



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The international community will gather in the second week of November to evaluate the progress that the 196 signatory countries to the Paris Climate Agreement have made since 2015. This will be the first global meeting of the signatories since President Donald Trump threatened to withdraw the United States (U.S.), the world's second most significant emitter, from the agreement.

For American farmers and ranchers, climate change is an economic issue. A stable agricultural industry depends on a stable, predictable climate.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) projects that climate change will increase the variability of pest pressures, disease prevalence, temperature swings, and precipitation patterns across the U.S., as well as the regularity of extreme events including storms, floods, dry spells, sustained drought, and heat waves.

The Paris Agreement's central aim is to coordinate efforts to keep the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2100. Global temperatures are already up at least 0.85 degrees Celsius (1.53 degrees Fahrenheit) when averaged over all land and ocean surfaces, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The agreement supports countries in sharing resources to combat the sources of climate change and adapt to its effects. It provides support to developing countries who are responsible for the smallest share of planet-warming emissions.

In light of the Trump Administration's position on the Paris Agreement, thousands of businesses and organizations from across U.S. civil society have signed the "We Are Still In" declaration, committing to pursue the goals of the Agreement. More than 1,700 businesses and investors signed, alongside 327 colleges and universities.

Simultaneously, the mayors of 381 cities signed the #ClimateMayors pledge and the governors of 12 states plus Puerto Rico joined the United States Climate Alliance.

Both groups support the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Major agriculture-related corporations either urged President Trump not to withdraw or criticized the action, including Cargill, Dow, DuPont, and Monsanto, as did major

food companies, including Campbell's, Coca-Cola, Dannon, General Mills, Kellogg, Mars, Mondelez (formerly Kraft Foods), and Unilever, among many others.

In the midst of this uncertainty, Food Tank is highlighting 25 farmer-led and farmer-focused organizations working in the U.S. who are committed to supporting the goals of the Paris Agreement and working towards them.

1. California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN)—California

In a statement to Food Tank, Renata Brillinger, the Executive Director of CalCAN, wrote, “The California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN) is a statewide coalition that advances state and federal policy to realize the powerful climate solutions offered by sustainable and organic agriculture. California is unequivocally committed to meeting or exceeding the terms of the Paris Accord, and has included incentives for ‘climate smart agriculture’ in its toolkit of climate solutions. CalCAN is the voice of sustainable and organic agriculture in the state, and continues to advocate for resources to support farmers in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon and enhancing resilience to climate impacts while providing many other environmental and health benefits.”

2. Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA)—North and South Carolina

CFSA is the oldest sustainable agriculture organization in Southeastern America. CFSA told Food Tank, “The Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) is a farmer-driven, membership-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps people in the Carolinas grow and eat local, organic foods by advocating for fair farm and food policies, building the systems family farms need to thrive, and educating communities about local, organic agriculture. As such, CFSA supports this position,

as food security is under threat from climate change and agroecological farming will mitigate that threat.”

3. Central Appalachian Network (CAN)—Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

CAN is a network of organizations working to transition Central Appalachia’s economy by creating economic opportunities that are environmentally sustainable, building on their cultural assets and natural resources, and meeting the needs of their region’s people. In a statement to Food Tank, CAN said, “CAN supports the principles and goals of the Paris Accord, regardless of official U.S. policy. Our perspective is that climate change presents very real challenges to rural communities, especially small farmers who rely on fertile soil, clean water, and predictable weather for their livelihoods. Climate change is a concrete threat to Appalachian communities, not just an abstract policy issue.”

4. Friends of Family Farmers—Oregon

Friends of Family Farmers works to build a strong and united voice for Oregon’s independent family farmers, food advocates, and concerned citizens. In a statement to Food Tank, they wrote, “As an organization that supports socially and environmentally responsible family-scale farmers and ranchers in Oregon, we believe climate change is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. Farmers and ranchers are increasingly experiencing climate-change related extreme weather events, including drought and devastating heat waves. But we can also be part of the solution, through regenerative agricultural practices that sequester carbon and organic matter in our soils. Our only critique of the Paris Agreement is that it doesn’t go far enough, depending too much on voluntary actions by nations that can walk away from their

commitments, and lacking binding enforcement mechanisms that will likely be needed to ensure the goals are ultimately met.”

5. The Farmers’ Guild and Community Alliance with Family Farms

(CAFF)—California

The Farmers’ Guild merged with CAFF in 2017. Together, through policy advocacy and on-the-ground programs, they work to support efforts to build sustainable food and farming systems that stimulate stronger local economies, create social equity and sustain natural resources. In a statement to Food Tank, Evan Wiig, the Executive Director of The Farmers’ Guild, wrote, “Soon after the announcement of America’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, our community rallied together to draft the Farmers Climate Pledge, making it very clear where we and forward-thinking family farms and ranches all across California stand on the question of climate change and the Paris Accord. Since then we’ve had over 100 farms and ranches join us.”

6. Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (Future Harvest CASA) —Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware

Future Harvest CASA works to provide education, networking, and advocacy to help build a sustainable Chesapeake foodshed, where food flows from farm and fishery to table in ways that strengthen farming and the regional food economy; protect the land, water, and air; and provide healthy, nutritious food that sustains the region’s communities and cities. In a statement to Food Tank, they wrote, “The latest science shows that agricultural land has enormous capacity to draw excess carbon from the air and store it in the soil where farmers need it. Future Harvest CASA is ramping up efforts to educate and train farmers on practices that store and keep carbon in soil as

well as ways to adapt to changing weather patterns and associated pest and weed pressures.

7. Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities—Michigan

The Groundwork Center works to build thriving local economies across Michigan, including farm and food economies. They work to achieve on-the-ground results in Michigan and leverage them to support other communities and improvements to state policy. The Groundwork Center told Food Tank, “We are a passionate group of advocates working to protect and enhance what makes Michigan so special. For us, that’s our lively towns and cities, our clean water, our farm and forest landscape, and the spirit of community that ties us all together. We build partnerships, raise awareness, and do our best to support what we see as an exciting community resilience movement that is gaining traction in Michigan.”

8. IFOAM – Organics International (the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements)—National: The IFOAM U.S. office is in Oregon

IFOAM, a worldwide umbrella organization for the organic agriculture movement, represents a broad-based coalition with 800 affiliates in more than 100 countries. IFOAM released a statement on June 13 condemning the Trump Administration’s announced withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. In a follow-up statement, they told Food Tank, “Today, climate change is making farming more challenging with an increase in extreme weather events, such as regular and stronger floods and droughts. Harvest losses, irredeemable damage to natural resources, and the destruction of farmers’ economic viability are among the most serious effects. Given its potential for reducing carbon emissions, enhancing soil fertility, and improving climate resilience, organic agriculture should form the basis of comprehensive policy tools for

addressing climate change. Along with the majority of the signatory countries, we, at IFOAM – Organics International continue our efforts to make the Paris Climate Change Agreement a landmark in human history which can stop the suffering of the world’s smallholders from the effects of climate change.”

9. Illinois Stewardship Alliance—Illinois

The Illinois Stewardship Alliance works towards a local food and farm system where local food producers earn a fair, living wage, local food education is integrated into all levels of education, infrastructure is rebuilt to accommodate local food systems, and good food is available for all. In a statement to Food Tank, they said, “Illinois Stewardship Alliance works with farmers across Illinois to bring awareness to climate change issues and how agriculture can serve as both a cause and solution. We work to help farmers implement conservation practices and restore ecological balance on their farms in ways that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially just. We stand with the Paris Accord and the rest of the world in our commitment to combating climate change and protecting our earth for the future.”

10. Kansas Rural Center—Kansas

In a statement to Food Tank, Mary Fund, Kansas Rural Center’s Executive Director, wrote, “At the heart of the Kansas Rural Center’s mission and program work is a strong commitment to biodiversity and diversification on our farms, in our food system, and in our communities. We believe that agroecology and ecologically based farming systems offer transformative solutions to hunger, food systems, and climate change—both at home and around the world. We can promote farming systems at local and regional levels that restore and build soil biological health, protect wildlife, pollinators and all living organisms, and sequester more carbon, but we need a strong

commitment and action from our leaders at the national and global levels to ensure that big steps are being taken. While the Trump Administration has chosen to remove the U.S. from the Paris Accord, we applaud other countries who have taken the lead and will continue to work toward local and regional solutions.”

11. Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI)—Wisconsin

In a statement to Food Tank, MFAI wrote, “Michael Fields Agricultural Institute works with farmers and rural communities across Wisconsin and the Midwest and with groups nationwide who are witnessing the tremendous challenges brought on by climate change. Farmers are experiencing increasing numbers of severe storm events, which erode the soil, flood fields, and destroy farm infrastructure. They also are having to contend with increased droughts and extreme temperatures, which destroy crops and alter the composition of weeds and other pests on their farms. The severity and unpredictability of these climate-related weather changes is increasing the risks of farming. Recent scientific evidence is that increased intensity of major rainfall events also have increased nutrients leaving farm soils through leaching and runoff and thus hypoxia in waterways in lakes and coastal regions of the country, imperiling livelihoods of fishermen and some recreational uses of water. We have witnessed numerous communities across Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest whose transportation repair costs are increasing significantly as roads, culverts, bridges, dams, and related transportation infrastructure is damaged through washouts. We support federal policy that adheres to the Paris Climate Accord and investments in research, conservation, energy infrastructure, and other infrastructure that supports reduction of the causes of climate change and mitigation of and adaptation to its most pernicious effects on agriculture and rural communities.”

12. Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS)—Michigan

MIFFS works make smaller-scale farming an attractive and viable livelihood. By connecting beginning and historically underserved farmers to each other and resource opportunities, they work to ensure social justice, environmental stewardship, and profitability in Michigan’s food system. MIFFS told Food Tank, “Michigan Food and Farming Systems supports the goals of the Paris Accord. Climate change and farming are inextricably linked, both with severe weather events impacting the ability to farm, and with available practices farmers can implement that have the potential to mitigate climate change. For the sake of our food system it is essential that we unite across the globe to continue setting goals, researching, and collaborating on ways combat and adapt to climate change.”

13. Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance (MOFFA)—Michigan

MOFFA promotes public awareness of the need for decentralized, secure, unadulterated, and humane methods and programs to nutritionally feed all of us. They work to support and promote organic agriculture and the development of food systems that revitalize and sustain local communities. In a statement to Food Tank, MOFFA said, “The Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance is dedicated to promoting environmentally sustainable and socially just food and farming systems. We support the goals of the Paris Accord; therefore we deplore the actions of the current administration in withdrawing from this international agreement. We intend to work tirelessly toward the reduction of excessive carbon in the atmosphere and to help define agriculture’s role in lessening the increase in global warming.”

14. Minnesota Food Association (MFA)—Minnesota

The mission of MFA is to build a sustainable food system based on social, economic, and environmental justice through education, training, and partnerships. To support beginning farmers from diverse backgrounds in starting organic farm businesses, MFA provides education, training, and technical assistance in sustainable farming, marketing, business planning, and identification and use of resources. In a statement to Food Tank, MFA wrote, “We are Farmers. We are Educators. We are Eaters. Our work places farmers on land to cultivate resilience of soil, water and pollinators while also ensuring a local supply of healthy food. Without intentional stewardship of the land and natural resources, we risk the health of our communities. We stand by the Paris Accord as it recognizes the fragility of our ecosystems, both the social and natural. We urge president Trump to stand by the accord and work collectively with our global community in mitigating the impact of climate change.”

15. Montana Organic Association (MOA)—Montana

In a statement to Food Tank, MOA wrote, “The Montana Organic Association is the voice of Montana’s organic community. MOA believes that the organic movement is the best hope for keeping family farms viable while providing clean, nutritious, and safe food to the community; helping secure our food system by supporting farm diversity; and contributing to a healthier environment that helps protect our precious wildlife and natural resources. To achieve this, MOA works to provide education, support, assistance, promotion, or representation for organic producers, processors, handlers, researchers, and other interested parties. MOA’s mission is to advocate and promote organic agriculture for the highest good of the people, the environment, and the state’s economy. Because climate change is already affecting Montana’s organic

producers and is projected to further increase the uncertainty and risk associated with their business, MOA supports the goals of the Paris Agreement.”

16. National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC)—National

The NFFC represents family farm and rural groups in the U.S. whose members face the challenge of the deepening economic recession in rural communities. The coalition works to empower family farmers by reducing the corporate control of agriculture and promoting a more socially just farm and food policy. The NFFC represents 25 family farm and rural groups in 40 U.S. states. Lisa Griffith, the Executive Director of NFFC, told Food Tank, “The National Family Farm Coalition supports the goals of the Paris Accord and will continue to work toward a world in which food production and food distribution are truly sustainable and equitable.”

17. National Farmers Union (NFU)—National

The NFU has been one of the leading voices in the U.S. farm community to speak up in opposition to the Trump Administration’s position on climate change. They initially urged the Administration to “maintain our existing commitments under the Paris Agreement,” and then sharply criticized the announced withdrawal. In a statement to Food Tank, the NFU said, “Family farmers and ranchers are on the front lines of climate change, and they have been experiencing costly disruption for some time. National Farmers Union supports the Paris climate goals, and works to enhance both the resiliency of family farm agriculture and expand farmer engagement in mitigating the negative effects of climate change. Farmers and ranchers have tremendous potential to sequester carbon and help the U.S. and other countries meet greenhouse gas reduction goals. We are encouraged by the work of many cities and corporations

who recognize this ability and who engage farmers and ranchers in the fight against climate change.”

18. National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association (NLFRTA) – National NLFRTA represents more than 200,000 Latino farmers and ranchers across the United States. Their mission is “to organize, engage, and empower Latino farm and ranching advocacy groups, farmworkers transitioning into farm ownership, and, generally, small producers, throughout the United States and beyond.” They provide a unified voice on policy matters including the Farm Bill, land stewardship and conservation, environmental issues, and climate change. NLFRTA writes, “In the United States and throughout Mexico and Central and South America, Latino farmers, whose common bond is their agrarian roots and language, are systematically left out of the decision-making processes.” Rudy Arredondo, NLFRTA’s President and CEO, told Food Tank that NLFRTA stands in support of the goals of the Paris Agreement.

19. National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)—National

The NSAC is an alliance of grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities. NSAC has publicly criticized the Trump Administration’s announced withdrawal, calling it “a bad move for America, a bad deal for farmers.” In a statement to Food Tank, they wrote, “Farmers are no strangers to the effects of climate change. Even with many farmers already feeling the impacts of extreme weather—catastrophic floods, severe droughts, and shifting pest pressures—and responding with climate smart farming practices, some in Washington, D.C., still refuse to fully acknowledge the impacts of climate change and the role farmers can play in adaptation and mitigation. Like many of our nation’s farmers and

farm-advocates across the country, we at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition are extremely disappointed in the President’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. We remain committed, however, to supporting farmers in their efforts to help prepare for and mitigate the harmful effects of climate change and to continuing to work with our partners in Congress to attempt to enhance those efforts.”

20. National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC)—National

The NYFC is the largest alliance of young farmers, ranchers, and consumers fighting for the future of American farming. NYFC works for young farmers by strengthening their social networks, helping them hone their skills through the facilitation of peer-to-peer learning, and fighting for the policies that will keep them farming for a lifetime. In a statement following the announced withdrawal, Andrew Bahrenburg, National Policy Director for the NYFC, said, “The future of farming depends on fighting global climate change, and we young farmers are on the front lines... We’re leaders in this fight, and our president should be too.” Bahrenburg added, “the National Young Farmers Coalition strongly opposes the Trump Administration’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Accords.”

21. Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society (NSAS)—Nebraska

NSAS is a nonprofit organization that is proud of its diverse membership and whose work spans the state of Nebraska. NSAS works to promote agriculture and food systems that build healthy land, people, communities, and quality of life for both present and future generations. Recognizing the essential relationship between healthy local agriculture and a strong local food system, NSAS supports local food producers and processors. In addition to an annual Healthy Farms Conference, NSAS

administers educational training and support programs designed to help producers who want to plan or re-evaluate their farm enterprises. William Powers, the Executive Director of NSAS, told Food Tank that the organization supports the goals of the Paris Accord and intends to work towards them.

22. Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)—Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont

The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) is a coalition of seven NOFA state chapters, all of which confirmed with Food Tank individually that they support the goals of the Paris Accord and intend to work towards them. Their collective purpose is to advocate for and educate on organic and sustainable agriculture, family-scale farming, and homesteading in rural, suburban, and urban areas. They also work on agricultural justice and other related policy issues. The coalition coordinates regular regional conferences, publishes a quarterly newspaper, and engages with regional policy and planning processes. The individual chapters manage dozens of programs between them, including organic certification programs, revolving loan funds, annual bulk buying programs, educational and technical assistance opportunities, and locally focused publications.

23. Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)—Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

NESAWG is a 12-state network of more than 500 participating organizations that works to unite farm and food system practitioners and allies to build a sustainable, just, and economically vibrant region. In a statement to Food Tank, NESAWG's Executive Director, Tracy Lerman, wrote, "NESAWG's purpose is to harness the

power that exists in our multi-sector Northeast regional network and catalyze meaningful change toward a sustainable and just food system. We were deeply troubled by the President’s decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Accords. Climate change is a critical concern for stakeholders working across the food system. Farmers already feel the impacts of extreme weather—catastrophic floods, severe droughts, and shifting pest pressures. Indigenous, low-income, people of color, and other front-line communities will be the first to experience the havoc wreaked by climate change—many already have. We remain committed to the goals of the Paris Agreement and urge Congress to pass forward-thinking policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate climate change impacts, promote ecological solutions, and protect our most vulnerable ecosystems and populations.”

24. Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA)—Ohio

In a statement to Food Tank, OEFFA wrote, “Conventional agriculture is a major contributor to global climate change, responsible for 10 percent or more of human-made carbon dioxide emissions, 60 percent of nitrous oxide emissions, and about 50 percent of the country’s methane emissions. A heavy reliance on petrochemical inputs, intensive cultivation of land and animals, long distance shipping, and indirectly, deforestation, which results in degraded and eroded soils, all contribute to the problem. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has identified 12 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions coming from agriculture. Climate change puts food security at risk, making it harder to produce food to feed a growing population within the context of extreme weather events. OEFFA supports efforts to incentivize a food and agricultural system that sequesters carbon, promotes diversity and resiliency, and supports the pillars of sustainability- social,

environmental, and economic health. We work toward those goals by advocating policies in support of organic and ecological agriculture systems and regional food system planning and development.”

25. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (Southern SAWG)—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia

The Southern SAWG works with and through hundreds of associated organizations across 13 southern states. By building partnerships, sharing information and conducting analysis, they transform isolated ideas and innovations into practical tools and approaches for widespread use. In a statement to Food Tank, Steve Muntz, Executive Director of Southern SAWG said, “The Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group’s mission is to empower and inspire farmers, individuals, and communities in the South to create an agricultural system that is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, and humane. We realize, to meet these four goals, sustainable agricultural production will have to substantially accelerate progress towards the challenge of maintaining long-term adequacy of food, fiber, and feed in the face of climate change. Farmers will be at the forefront for this challenge, both because agriculture plays a critical role in addressing climate change and because farmers face a changing environment in which to grow their produce. Therefore, Southern SAWG supports the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change and intends to work toward them through its own strategic goals and subsequent actions.”

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Join the Conversation:



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