

Climate Change Action Items

Agriculture's Role in Climate Discussions



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CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGRICULTURE

Farmers are at the forefront of climate-smart farming, putting scientific solutions, technology, and innovation to work to protect land, air, and water resources. Farmers are not just adopting eco-friendly solutions; they are also growing solutions through clean and renewable energy on the farm. For the United States to be a positive contributor to climate change, we need to produce our food here and not import it from other countries that may or may not have the strict environmental and food safety standards that we have. Agriculture has made great strides over the past decades to improve efficiency and reduce its overall emissions, and it is important that agriculture receive credit for the ecosystem services it provides such as carbon sequestration.

- U.S. agriculture is a low greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting industry, contributing less than 10% of GHGs, and farmers are taking proactive steps to make their footprint even smaller through conservation programs, precision technology and sustainable farming practices that protect our natural resources.
- Combined, U.S. agriculture, land use and forestry are a net sink for carbon emissions, removing 172 million metric tons of CO₂-equivalent emissions from the atmosphere in 2017.
- Livestock production has become far more efficient and less greenhouse gas-intensive in recent years, accounting for only 3.3% of emissions, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

If agriculture is going to continue to lead the way in sustainability, the country must prioritize its investment in climate research and innovation and provide farmers the freedom to build on their sustainability efforts through voluntary, market-based programs. In addition, farmers recognize the impact that increased extreme weather events and a changing climate have on their farm and the entire agriculture industry. NYFB believes that adaptation strategies and tools can be utilized to face the challenges of more inclement weather and a changing climate.

ENERGY

A diverse, domestic energy supply is important to fuel America's economic growth and prosperity while strengthening our energy security. Further development and use of renewable energy sources such as ethanol, biodiesel, biomass, solar and wind are critical to our nation's energy future and will further strengthen the overall national security of the United States. The production and use of agriculture-based fuel, including corn and cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel are key to our domestic energy supply.

Action: Support a common-sense approach to climate change legislation that gives credit to agriculture for their efforts and does not unduly burden farmers.

- ***Providing voluntary, incentive-based tools for farmers, ranchers and forest owners to maximize the sequestration of carbon and the reduction of other greenhouse gas emissions as well as increase the resilience of the land.***
- ***Supporting the development of and overseeing private sector markets for GHG credits.***
- ***Promoting public and private sector tools to incentivize farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to prioritize and scale climate-smart practices.***
- ***Offering incentives for farmers to reduce energy consumption, increase use of on-farm renewable energy, and make continued progress toward reducing the lifecycle GHG emissions of agriculture- and forestry-based renewable energy.***
- ***Streamlining consumer-facing packaging and implementing a public-private partnership to reduce the GHG impact of food waste and loss within the food value chain.***
- ***Increasing federal investment in agriculture, forestry, and food-related research substantially and continuously.***
- ***Support a market for increased use and development of biofuels that can not only be produced on but also used on farms, displacing traditional fossil fuels.***

For more information:

- Farmers for a Sustainable Future: <https://www.fb.org/land/fsf>
- Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance: <https://agclimatealliance.com/>