

Bringing the **Farm Bill** to Your Farmers Market: **A Toolkit**



About this toolkit

Dedication

We dedicate this toolkit to Appalachian farmers and farmers' market shoppers. We hope this toolkit inspires you to advocate for a strong Farm Bill for Appalachia.



Questions about the toolkit?

We see this as a choose your own adventure guide to talking about the Farm Bill at your local farmers market. If you have questions, **fill out our Farmers Market Toolkit Form** to hear back from a ReImagine Appalachia organizer!



Special Thanks

Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
Community Farm Alliance

www.reimagineappalachia.org



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Why talk about the **Farm Bill** at your farmers market?

Dear farmers market shoppers,

The Farm Bill can shape the next five years' entire trajectory for the farmers you know and love. As a lover of fresh, healthy food, you will be impacted, too – probably more than you think.

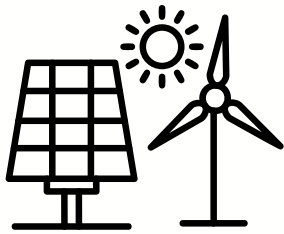
What is the Farm Bill? The Farm Bill is one of the biggest pieces of legislation that will be passed this year – and it's not just about farms. The Farm Bill will be incredibly important for Appalachia – from food stamps, to farmers markets, to funding renewable energy, and flood prevention. Yes, it's a lot!

Congress must reauthorize the Farm Bill **every five years - and it expires this fall**. This means we have the opportunity right now to shape the next five years of US food policy. A strong Farm Bill could change the lives of millions of people across Appalachia and the US, many of whom lack access to healthy food. It's important to anyone who lives in a flood zone – or anyone whose home is fast becoming a flood zone thanks to climate change – or anyone who wants to breathe clean air, or introduce their children to the gorgeous green of the Appalachia where they grew up.

We know you care about Appalachia's people, our planet, and our plates. Let's use the power of the farmers market as a center for community gathering to make it a hub of organizing around the demand that our legislators include the following priorities in the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,
Relmagine Appalachia

What are some of the **priorities** we would like to weave within the Farm Bill?



RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM (REAP)

This program provides grants and guaranteed loans so agricultural producers and small businesses in rural areas can implement cost-saving energy **efficiency improvements and switch to renewable energy sources.**



AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE ACT (ARA)

This act will expand **funding for research and innovation to make our food system more sustainable at every level**, from state grants for improving soil health all the way to tracking and addressing industrial food waste in processing and distribution centers.



INCREASING LAND ACCESS SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITIES ACT

Introduced by the National Young Farmers Coalition, this bill **creates support for young, first-generation, support for Black, Indigenous and people of color to purchase farmland** and build a new generation of farmers and local wealth as they enrich our food systems.

LOCAL FARMS AND FOODS ACT

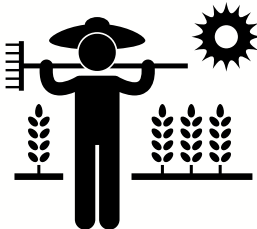
This bill gives small and mid-sized farms a leg up to connect with national supply chains and value-added investment opportunities.



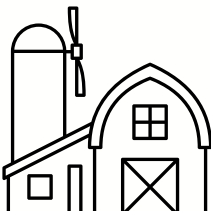
It reauthorizes, expands, and simplifies access to all major nutrition programs, like **GuSNIP** which gives “double dollars” to food assistance recipients when they use those dollars to purchase fresh food at farmers markets.

It also includes programs like the Local **Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP)** and the **Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMMP)** which are essential supports for local farmers and markets.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) & CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)



Investments to improve soil health to reduce flooding and better crop yield are essential for farmers to adapt to the next generation of farming challenges. The **NRCS Working Lands programs, such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** have been a successful model for soil health by providing technical assistance and cost share for producers to deliver environmental benefits.



SMALL FARMS CONSERVATION ACT

This bill helps small farms design and implement conservation strategies that will **keep them in operation for years to come.**



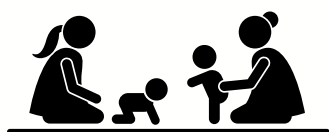
EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION (EWP) PROGRAM

Disaster assistance helps farms recover after a disaster and prepare for future flood events. The **Natural Resources Conservation Service** supports innovative conservation practices such as multi-cropping that can reduce flooding by as much as 60%. The **Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)** program helps rural communities implement watershed projects to reduce flood risks.



STRENGTHENING LOCAL PROCESSING ACT (SLPA)

Producing and marketing food locally means burning substantially less gasoline in transit, so the carbon footprint and the consumer price of meat both drop. But those gains are wasted if your local, organic meat has to be trucked hundreds of miles away from its place of origin for processing, only to travel the same distance back to your farmers market. Avoiding that round trip lets farmers fight high food prices, and reap the **full benefits of climate-conscious local production**.



EXPANDING CHILDCARE IN RURAL AMERICA ACT (ECRA)

Work schedules in rural areas often don't line up with a 9-5, leaving farmer and farmworker parents in need of **quality, affordable childcare at odd hours**. This bill works with rural childcare providers to meet residents' specific needs and expand options for young families.

How do I engage my farmers market?

Find your market

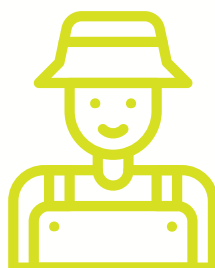
This website has a great directory of local farmers markets, and includes contact information for farmers market managers: www.usdalocalfoodportal.com.

You can also look at your state's Department of Agriculture website.



Check in with your local market manager

We encourage you to get a hold of your local farmers market manager to talk about your interest in promoting the farm bill at the farmers market. Briefly describe your ideas for the market to make sure the market manager is comfortable with your plan. They will likely have useful feedback to make your event even more fun and impactful!



How do I engage my farmers market?



What **questions** should I ask my market manager?

May I set up a table at the market to talk about the Farm Bill?

What kind of materials work best for the audience? The market managers know best who attends the markets and what activities are the biggest hit!

Will there be kids? Are there any most popular children's activities?

What rules should I be aware of as my team plans our table setup?

How can I contact farmers market vendors directly?

Are there group meetings for vendors?

Does an email listserv or a Facebook group exist?

Who in that group might be willing to connect?

Can I invite our Congresspeople to attend and invite the media to talk about the Farm Bill?

How can we work together to make market organizers feel more comfortable with bringing media onboard?

Who are the keystone vendors or other central community members with whom I should be planning?

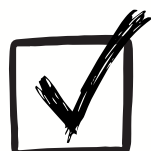
What logistics should we know in advance?

Get details about parking, tables, tents, tent weights, other things to consider for the specific logistics of your local market.

Does our Farmers Market participate in any of these important Farm Bill-funded programs?



LAMP- The Local Agriculture Market Program



FMRP - Farmers Market Resiliency Program



Senior or WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children) Program



Double dollars (GuSNIP)

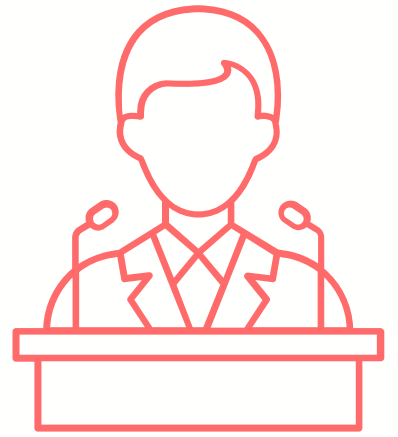


Farmers Market Promotion Program

Are there other ways in which your local farmers market leaders are aware of benefiting from the Farm Bill?

Note: This [site](#) has information for farmers markets with tax-exempt status concerned about political activity. Most nonprofits are allowed to do some lobbying, and nonprofits can provide educational information to elected officials at any point. For example, it is not considered lobbying to let policymakers know about the activities that grant supported, or the impacts that the grant-funded work had on your community.

HOW DO I INVITE MY **LEGISLATOR**



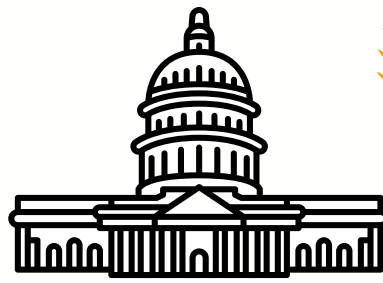
TO MY FARMERS MARKET?

Members of Congress - and their staff - return to their home states and districts for the annual August recess.

A lot of them will be eager to visit farms and farmers markets and learn more about how the Farm Bill affects their constituents.

Even if they already support some or all of our policy priorities, a market visit will help them justify those priorities when they get back to Congress!

HOW TO INVITE YOUR LEGISLATOR



01

Go to www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member

Drop in your zip code - it will pull up the contact information for your Representative and Senators.

02

Find your Members of Congress

Your best bet is to find the closest in-district office and give them a call to share your request and answer any questions they may have about your event. You can ask them for the best contact to follow up with to submit your request, or you can paste the letter below into the contact form on the website.

03

Contact their office

Make sure to give them advanced notice - they will be busy planning their August recess activities and the sooner you contact them, the better chance you have of booking your Member of Congress or a Congressional Staffer.

04

Share your priorities

And ask about theirs. Electeds and their staff will be eager to share their priorities for the bill.

05

Thank your representatives

Make sure to follow up with a thank-you message so your legislator knows you're grateful for their engagement in the community!

06

Share on social media

Be your representative's biggest fan by taking a picture of them at the event and sharing on social media. They love the good publicity!

SAMPLE INVITATION TO YOUR LEGISLATOR



Dear **[insert staffer]**,

On behalf of **[insert local group if applicable]** I would like to invite **[Senator/Representative or a member of your staff]** to attend our local farmers market as part of an event to promote the importance of the Farm Bill in **[our community]**. The event details are:

[Date, Time, Address]

Here is a link to the **[local market's website]** to learn more about our great farmers' market and some of our vendors. About **[average number of vendors]** will be present and around **[average weekly traffic]** attend the market, but we hope to increase attendance with this event. We'd also like to invite local media to attend.

We'll be having activities for children, and of course you'll have to try the **[insert your favorite few things to buy at your local market]**. If you can't make those dates, but are interested in attending another time, the market occurs **[insert market schedule]** and we are happy to discuss other opportunities.

Thanks for all you do to support our community,

[Your name, Organization (if applicable) and contact information]

HOW TO INVITE THE **MEDIA** **TO MY FARMERS MARKET**

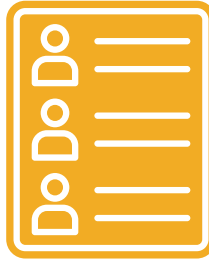
Members of Congress care enormously about hometown media.

No coverage is too small to make an impact.



Create a media list

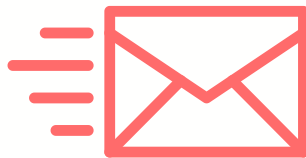
Invite your local TV affiliates, radio stations, local newspapers via email by sending an advisory like the one below. Even better if you follow up by phone, or tag them on Twitter. Reporters' inboxes get flooded with advisories every day, so reminders help!



Before the event

A media advisory is essentially an invitation for the press to attend your event. It's shorter than a press release and covers the basics:

Who, What, Where, When and Why.



After the event

After your event, you can send a press release to your press list with a few quotes from participants or the Member of Congress about the importance of the Farm Bill. Consider posting a summary with photos on a public Facebook, Twitter, or other page, and tagging local media or sending the link to your media list.



SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: **[Your Name, Phone Number, Email]**

[Your Group] to Highlight the Farm Bill's Impacts on **[Your Community]** at **[Your local farmers market]**

Insert any local leaders, Members of Congress, or other noteworthy attendees or events as a subheading. E.g. Congressman Farmer will attend the event which features live music and children's activities.

You'll want a 2-3 sentence paragraph describing what your event is, why your community *should* show up, and how they *can* show up. Example: **[Local Group]** is hosting a farmers' market event to demonstrate the importance of the Farm Bill in **[your community]**. The Farm Bill, reauthorized every five years, expires this fall. It supports our food systems at every level, from farmers, farmworkers, and food-processing production partners all the way to consumers who rely on nutrition programs. With **[activities/children's performers/musicians/speakers]**, this interactive event will highlight the many ways in which the Farm Bill's impacts are felt in our community.

What: Event at the **[Name of farmers market]** to highlight the Farm Bill's local impacts

Who: **[Your organization], [Any local leaders, Members of Congress, or other noteworthy attendees]**

When: **[Date and Beginning and End Time of Event]**

Where: **[Address of the event]**

###

HOW TO MAKE IT **FUN** **AT MY FARMERS MARKET!**

Farmers markets are a wonderful way to showcase what's best about your community! Bring in interactive elements to attract a crowd and get folks to stay a while.

Consider bringing fun prizes for people who complete activities. It can be as simple as a lollipop or a sticker.

(Note: if you are handing out any kind of food or candy, check with the market manager to make sure you aren't conflicting with any products sold by vendors at the market.)

We'll highlight some activities here - but we'll update activities and have more details on our website here:

ReImagineAppalachia.org/FarmersMarket.



The ideal **table** setup:



A beautiful tabling example from our friends at WV Rivers Coalition

- 1 Your Logo**

Make sure attendees of the farmers market know right away who you are affiliated with in order to gain trust!
- 2 Tablecloth**

Provides a clean, professional look that will make folks want to stop by your table and see what you're about.
- 3 Plastic holders/paper weights**

Always prepare for a windy tabling day! It's also useful to have a tent just in case it's very sunny or rainy.
- 4 Information**

This can be a one-page fact sheet about a particular campaign, your organization's pamphlet, or a QR code to an action alert.
- 5 Sign-up sheet**

This is crucial to have to follow-up with the people you have engaged with, so that you can add them to your newsletter and they can get further involved in your work.
- 6 Swag/interactive activity**

Have some fun things to hand out (we recommend plastic-free, union made items) and have them partake in our Farm Bill interactive games!

Invite local talent

Music! Chances are your local farmers' market may already have musicians booked - but if they don't it's a wonderful addition.

Invite **local farmers, vendors or educators** to demo their process, products, or bring animals for children to learn about or interact with.



Photo op

People love a **photo op** - create a selfie station, or photo booth station, or interactive backdrop or prop for photo opportunities.



Above: Bring mascots! Kids love to get photos of characters like Ranger Rick!

Right: Fun cut out photo opportunity to celebrate local pollinators and native plants



Encourage creativity

Set up a whiteboard or roll of butcher paper where people can write why the Farm Bill matters to them, and take a picture to share on social media or bring the paper to your federal representative's local office!



Farmers Market Bingo!

Here are two example bingo cards - you can personalize your own, of course!

Having a fun one for the kids, and one focused on Farm Bill Policy for the adults is a fun way to get folks exploring the market.

- Bingo for kids ([here](#) or see page 19)
- Bingo for farmers market policies (see page 20)

FARMERS MARKET BINGO



TasteWiseKids
at Home

Find something <i>in a jar</i>	Find something red	Find a fruit or vegetable that was grown close to where you live	Find a farmer selling mushrooms	Find a local artist or singer
Find a farmer selling flowers	Find the truck a farmer brought their produce in	Find something you have tasted before	Find a vegetable bigger than your hand	Find something being sold in a quart
Find a vegetable that grows on a vine	Find something a bee might pollinate		Find something Green	Find a stand selling something that is not food
Find something you've never tasted before	Find a farmer wearing a hat	Find a vegetable that grows underneath the ground	Find a farmer who made a food product using a cow	Find something Orange
Find something Yellow	Find a vegetable smaller than your hand	Find a dozen eggs	Find something made by bees	Find someone shopping with a reusable bag

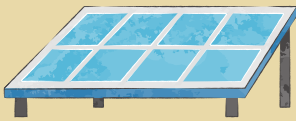
HOW TO PLAY

Walk around your local farmers' market. Mark an X on the squares when you see it in the market. **Tip: feel free to look up examples, like "vegetables that grow on vines" if that would be helpful beforehand.**

Your goal is to cross out five squares in a row (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) on one trip to the market. If you're playing with a friend or family member you are with, see who can get BINGO first. If you are playing with a friend or family member from a distance see who has the most squares X-ed out at the end of their trip by comparing later over the phone.

Farmers Market Bingo:

Ask if their farm uses **renewable energy** or **energy efficient practices** and if they partner with **EQIP**



Ask the Market Manager if they are a participant in the **Farmers Market Promotion Program**



Ask a vendor how many **farmworkers** worked to bring their product to market



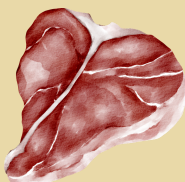
Find a vendor that participates in **Senior or WIC programs**



Ask a vendor if they benefit from any **USDA programs** - or would like to!



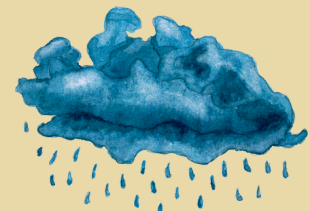
Ask a vendor selling meat how **far** away their **processing center** is



Ask a vendor if they participate in **GuSNIP's double dollars program**



Ask if their farm has faced **flooding issues** from extreme weather events



Have participants trace their **food's path from farm to table** -- and the Farm Bill's role at each step -- on 4x11 chalk squares or sheets of paper on the ground.

1

Bring a kiddie pool or bins with water, dirt or sand for kids to play in or hunt for **prizes**.

2

Soil erosion demonstration - talk about the importance of soil health through fun hands-on activities like this one.

3

Learn how much ~hangs in the balance~ of the Farm Bill, and experience the interdependence of our food system with nail-biting tension, by **playing Jenga**.

4

5

Bring chalk for sidewalk drawings, coloring pages or coloring contest, and use **this guide** to choose from dozens of fun farmers' market activities for kids.

6

Draw families in with **sensory experiences** -
- let kids dig into sensory bins of dried beans or rice, or take advantage of summer to pass around fresh tomatoes and corn at various stages of shucking.

7

Scavenger Hunt!
Participants can answer questions -- using answers from participating vendors, of course -- about Farm Bill experiences and priorities -- for a reward that you provide.

8

Bring **postcards** addressed to your federal representative for people to sign, or ask them to fill out the cards with the help of a template plus a personal touch. Hint: dropping the cards off at your rep's local office is more effective than mailing them!

9

Learn about harnessing **power from the sun** using sun prints!

FUN FARMERS MARKET ACTIVITIES

EXAMPLE MATERIALS TO HAND OUT AT MY FARMERS MARKET

Don't overwhelm participants with too many handouts and fact sheets.

- We have some materials on our website reimagineappalachia.org/FarmersMarket.
- Bread for the World has State Hunger Fact Sheets that show how the Farm Bill affects nutrition programs in each state [here](#).
- Our partners at fundedbyfarmbill.org have postcards and other materials that are available to mail in limited quantities. Fill out our [contact form](#) to request a packet.
- Regenerate America has [great graphics](#)



HOW ELSE CAN I **SUPPORT** THE FARM BILL?

Post to Social Media

- Post images of your event to social media - consider tagging your legislators and local media. Use our **social media toolkit**!
- Share your stories with the hashtag **#FundedByTheFarmBill**.
- Farmers and Vendors at the farmers market can use this **Funded by Farm Bill social toolkit for farmers**.

Follow Us On Social Media

Some of the groups that contributed to this toolkit are busy on social media - follow them for action opportunities and stories about how these issues affect our region and ongoing opportunities to reach out to your Congress Members:



Twitter

@newdeal4us
@farmallianceky
@pasafarming



Instagram

@reimagine_appalachia
@farmallianceky
@pasa_farming

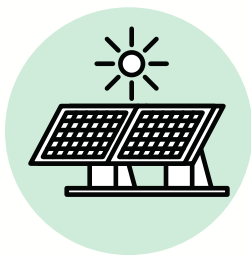
Contribute to Local Media: Letter to the Editor Tips

The opinion pages are one of the most read pages of the newspaper - and we know that elected officials read them closely. An opinion editorial (op-ed) or a Letter to the Editor (LTE) is a powerful tool to get the word out about your values for the Farm Bill.

You can find formatting tips [here](#).

Capturing everything you want to say in just 200-300 words can be challenging. You can introduce yourself and why you care about the Farm Bill, or highlight relevant personal and professional connections (Do you work on a farm? Own a farm animal? Shop at a farmers market?).

Here are some broad talking points - but feel free to pick one issue to focus on:



The Farm Bill is one of the most important pieces of legislation impacting rural America: its provisions can support infrastructure development everywhere from electricity to childcare for agricultural communities, and labor protections for the farmworkers and processing workers who feed us.



Done right, the farm bill can solve big issues like child labor - today, children are still forced into illegal, dangerous meatpacking work or laboring on small farms under a legal loophole.



Most people across Appalachia and the U.S. eat food. And most of those people would prefer that their food be fresh, nutritious, locally-produced, and, of course, affordable. Every one of those folks is impacted by the Farm Bill, even if they're not farmers or farmworkers.



And so, too, is anyone who lives in a flood zone – or anyone whose home is fast becoming a flood zone thanks to climate change – or anyone who wants to breathe clean air, work a job that benefits their household and the earth, or introduce their children to the gorgeous green of the Appalachia in which they grew up.



The Farm Bill doesn't just determine who can afford to be a farmer and who can afford to access fresh, nutritious, and locally-grown produce, meat, and dairy. It's also a major opportunity to shape climate policy by incentivizing regenerative farming; rewarding farmers who use their land for practices like multi-cropping, which can reduce flooding by up to 60%; and encouraging reforestation practices centered on Indigenous expertise.



When we build flood and climate resiliency into the Farm Bill, the work needed to carry out those infrastructure improvements can go to members of disadvantaged communities in the form of family-sustaining union jobs.



Understanding how our food systems are interconnected offers our best shot at enjoying a livable, equitable, and edible Appalachia into the future.



To this end, I am hopeful that Representative [First Name, Last Name] and Senators [First Name, Last Name] and [First Name, Last Name] will help ensure that these priorities are #FundedByFarmBill.



Check out our **Farm Bill Platform** if you are looking for priorities to mention by name!

Take **Email** Action!



Scan this QR Code to send an
email to tell your
Members of Congress:



We Need a Strong Farm Bill for Appalachia!

Call your Member of Congress!



Call the Capitol Switchboard to be connected to your
Member of Congress:

(202) 224-3121

A switchboard operator will connect you directly with
the office you request.

Here's what you can say:

Hello, my name is [_____] and I live in
[_____] my zip code is [_____]. I wanted to
call to show my support for farmers' market programs
in the Farm Bill, as well as funding for small farmers
and climate smart soil health programs that can
prevent flooding. I also support more funding for
nutrition programs like SNAP and fewer barriers for
people who benefit from these life saving programs.
Thank you for your time!

A FARM BILL THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE SHOULD:

- 🌱 Grow our farmers markets
- 🌱 Expand Nutrition Programs
- 🌱 Support Sustainable and Climate Resilient Agriculture
- 🌱 Create New Opportunities for Small Farmers & Woman and Minority-Owned Farms
- 🌱 Prevent Flooding
- 🌱 Ensure entry points for new workers & worker safety



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What do you want to see ?
#FundedByTheFarmBill

Thank You,

From
Name Zip Code

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Grow our farmers
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Create New Opportunities
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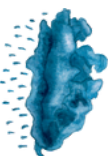
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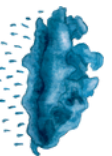
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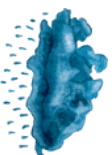
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Woman and Minority-
Owned Farms



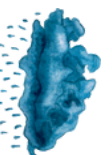
Ensure entry points for
new workers & worker
safety



Support Sustainable &
Climate Resilient
Agriculture



Prevent Flooding in
our communities



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