



### FACT #3

Big corporate agribusiness actually opposes U.S. farm policy. U.S. farm policy does help all American farm families because all farm families feel the sting of a world market that is not free or fair.

*Critics of U.S. farm policy complain that benefits are going to "big" farmers instead of "small" farmers but what they don't say is that most anyone who farms enough to be a full-time farmer is a "big" farmer in their book.*

Critics of U.S. farm policy use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's definition of a "farmer," which is anyone who produces a crop valued at \$1,000 or more (the equivalent of a 4-acre corn farm), so the percentage of farm families who are trying to make most or all of their living off the land is going to be small compared to the overall number of "farmers." In other words, most anyone who farms enough to be a full-time farmer is a "big" farmer by comparison.

While 38% of these farm families receive 87% of the benefits, these farm families:

- produce 92% of America's food and fiber.
- make most, if not all, of their living off the land.
- operate the equivalent of a 372-acre corn farm or larger – about the average sized Minnesota farm.

While 62% of these farms, known as "rural residence farms," receive 13% of the benefits:

- these farms produce 8% of America's food and fiber.
- many of their owners have little dependence, if any, on the farm for income.
- often the owners see their farms as a way to enjoy rural living rather than as a means to making a living.

While both groups of farmers are important to rural America, each plays a unique role in production agriculture with different levels of risk and different expectations of help.

**U.S. farm policy helps all farm families according to their risk, ensuring that the right amount of help is there when help is needed most.**

*"The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything he buys at retail, sells everything he sells at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways."*

-President John F. Kennedy



*"Our farmers deserve praise, not condemnation; and their efficiency should be cause for gratitude, not something for which they are penalized."*

-President John F. Kennedy



## Myth #4

U.S. farm policy is nothing but corporate welfare benefiting only those receiving direct help.



*“Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to our farmers and ranchers for helping to ensure stability in our economy, for providing food products that amply meet all our citizens’ needs, and for representing what is best about America. They show the character and values that have made this country strong, values of love and family, faith in God, and respect for nature.”*

-President George W. Bush

*Critics of U.S. farm policy would cede our food production to unstable places like the Third World, but in these times does any American want to depend on the Third World for a safe and abundant supply of food and fiber?*

The *Washington Post* printed a story, dated May 5, 2002, citing critics complaining that increased help to U.S. farmers would frustrate a "consensus" on helping Third World agriculture. The question the *Washington Post* never asked and critics never bothered to answer is: Does any American want to depend on the Third World for a safe and abundant supply of food and fiber?

*The places in the world where critics of U.S. farm policy would have Americans depend on for food are often places of political instability that do not have the safeguards on food safety that Americans expect.*

The outcome is increased anxiety about foreign production methods, at best, and heightened concern about bioterrorism, at worst.

*The United States is one of the few countries in the world that has never known widespread hunger. Even the United States, however, has had food shortages and has rationed food to ensure all Americans have enough to eat.*

U.S. farm policy critics often point to an abundance of food and fiber and say, "never to worry." Likewise, a December 1945 article of *The American Political Science Review* noted that, prior to Pearl Harbor, few Americans gave serious thought to food shortages and rationing. But, 16 months later, the United States government began rationing sugar, processed foods, meats, and cheese. That was just 61 years ago. While a lot has changed since then, including methods of producing food and fighting war, the unforeseen can happen and the U.S. should always be prepared with ample supplies of safe food and farmers who know how to produce it.



*Soup lines and food rations were a reality in the 1930s and 1940s.*





## FACT #4

U.S. farm policy is important to national security, ensuring a safe, abundant, and affordable domestic food supply, and vital to a strong rural and urban economy, with the food and fiber industry creating 25 million jobs, producing \$3.5 trillion in output, and accounting for 15% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product.

*The abundance of safe and affordable food should be a source of comfort and security.*

It is dangerous and wrong to believe that, because America has been blessed, our Nation is now immune from hardships, whether caused by nature or manmade.

*The benefits of U.S. farm policy do not stop at the door of farm families who receive direct help, but support both rural and urban economies, with the food and fiber industry creating 25 million jobs, producing \$3.5 trillion in output, and accounting for 15% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product – larger than the construction, transportation, and utilities industries combined.*

*U.S. farm policy critics call for an end to the chief means of rural development without offering any alternative, either because these critics know government cannot create viable businesses out of whole cloth to replace production agriculture, or because they are content to leave rural communities to die on the vine.*

Under today's budget constraints it is hard to imagine a scenario in which additional resources would be available to help rural America finance new businesses and replace the millions of lost jobs due to the exodus of production agriculture. It would be too costly, especially when less than 40% of new businesses actually stay in business.

*U.S. farm policy critics either forget or ignore that the economic collapse in rural America resulting from an end to U.S. farm policy would cause economic aftershocks in nearby cities.*

For example, an article in *The Economist*, dated May 12, 2001, noted that the city of Chicago suffered in the 1980s when the region was hit by a "crushing combination" of factors including a farm recession. Imagine the repercussions to cities such as Chicago if U.S. farm policy was eliminated.

*U.S. farm policy critics also forget or ignore the thousands of public schools, hospitals, and other important community facilities whose construction and maintenance are largely financed through property and sales taxes paid by farmers and ranchers.*

Imagine the further consolidation of schools and even less access to rural health care in the absence of U.S. farm policy.

*House Agriculture Committee Chairman Larry Combest and Ranking Member Charlie Stenholm pressed for passage of the 2002 Farm Bill because of its importance to the U.S. economy.*



## Myth #5

U.S. farm policy interferes with free markets and free trade.

## FACT #5

U.S. farm policy fully complies with U.S. trade agreements. And, with foreign tariffs on agricultural goods more than 5 times higher than U.S. tariffs, U.S. farm policy helps level the playing field so our farmers can compete in a world market that is not free or fair.



President Roosevelt's Administration advocated an end to anti-competitive practices because:

*"Uncontrolled competition, like unregulated liberty, is not really free."*

*U.S. farm policy critics use the same arguments that some used in the early 1900s to justify the anticompetitive practices of trusts, combinations, and monopolies - that U.S. farm policy, like anti-trust laws, interferes with free markets.*

At that time, the vast majority of Americans disagreed and so did then President Theodore Roosevelt, whose Attorney General advocated tearing down trusts, combinations, and monopolies as affronts to free markets, stating, "Uncontrolled competition, like unregulated liberty, is not really free."

***In today's world market, the vast majority of Americans would agree that uncontrolled world competition that allows anti-competitive trade practices employed by foreign governments against U.S. farmers standing alone is not free or fair. Foreign tariffs, averaging more than 5 times higher than the average U.S. imposed tariff, and foreign subsidies, some more than 6 times per acre higher than help to U.S. farmers, must come down so American farmers can compete on a level playing field.***

In the meantime, U.S. farm policy should continue to help level this playing field with help to America's farmers until trade negotiations achieve a truly free and fair world market.

Toward this end, U.S. farm policy fully complies with U.S. commitments made under the World Trade Organization. In fact, U.S. farm policy under the 2002 Farm Bill strengthens U.S. trade negotiators, making foreign countries reconsider their big subsidies and insurmountable trade barriers the same way the former Soviet Union was forced to reconsider the Cold War when then-President Reagan established the U.S. policy of "Peace Through Strength" that brought down Communism.



Peace through strength was criticized as a contradiction until it brought down Communism.°U.S. farm policy strengthens the U.S. objective of tearing down foreign subsidies and trade barriers to bring about free trade in the world.

## Myth #6

The 2002 Farm Bill shortchanges conservation.

### FACT #6

The 2002 Farm Bill provides over \$39 billion for conservation — the highest level of funding in history for conservation programs that prevent soil erosion, preserve and restore wetlands, clean the air and water, and enhance wildlife.

*The 2002 Farm Bill sets a record high for conservation funding – about 80% higher than the record level set under the 1996 Farm Bill.*

*Voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill are the most successful and popular environmental programs in the United States, saving millions of acres from soil erosion, enhancing water and air quality, and promoting wetland and wildlife habitat restoration and preservation - creating a boon for wildlife populations.*

*By helping highly efficient and productive American farming operations, U.S. farm policy also protects millions of acres of wildlands in the Third World where low efficiency, low productivity agriculture would otherwise increase.*

As Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug noted in *The Wall Street Journal*, dated May 13, 2002, the modern production practices of U.S. farmers have "...had a dramatic conservation effect: saving millions of acres of wildlands all over the Third World from being cleared for more low-yield crops." Borlaug added that but for these advances in agriculture, "...at least half of today's 16 million square miles of global forest would already have been plowed down, and the rest would be scheduled for destruction in the next three decades."

*U.S. farm policy's help to farm families also inherently contributes to a cleaner environment by "decoupling" benefits from production so farmers have flexibility to dedicate their land to the agricultural or conserving use that's best for soil and water quality on their land.*

**The 2002 Farm Bill funds conservation programs at their highest levels in history while sustaining U.S. production agriculture that has helped save millions of acres of wildlands in the Third World.**





## Myth #7

All special interests critical of U.S. farm policy just want good public policy.

## FACT #7

Many special interests critical of U.S. farm policy cross the ideological divide but share a common denominator: agendas that the vast majority of Americans reject.

While reasonable people can and do disagree about the best course for U.S. farm policy, there are a number of special interests that have entered this otherwise constructive debate with other agendas, using questionable tactics.

Some of these special interests, although discredited by sound science, believe that today's farming practices are bad for human health and the environment and that killing U.S. farm policy is a way to stop these farming practices.

These special interests take the extreme view that increased food production should be avoided because it will drive up world population, leading to environmental degradation, and have argued for the return of the U.S. Great Plains to a "buffalo commons."

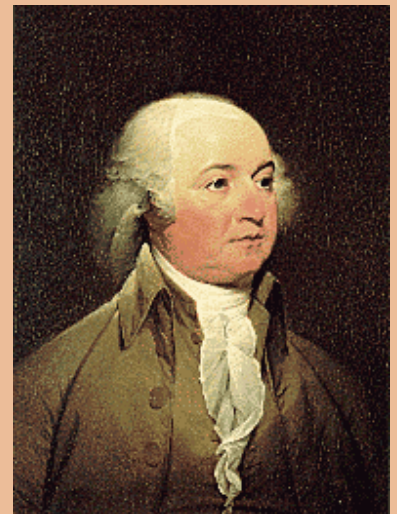
The approach of these radical special interests is self-defeating in a world economy where loss of food production in the United States only means increased food production in places like the Third World where there are few food safety and environmental safeguards.

In addition to saving millions of acres of wildlands and global forest all over the Third World from being cleared for more low-yield crop production, Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug also noted that high efficiency agriculture in places like the United States has led to healthier people living longer lives than ever before because of safe and abundant food.

Other special interests want to help the Third World so badly that they offer the shirt off someone else's back - rural America's - to achieve their generosity, never mind that the vast majority of Americans do not want to cede agricultural production to the Third World and do not want to depend on this region of the world for food.

Still other special interests oppose helping U.S. farmers in the name of free trade. Some are doctrinaire and simply ignore the anti-competitive advantage enjoyed by foreign farmers. Others are more pragmatic, seeing help to U.S. farmers as a nice chip to bargain away in negotiations in exchange for more access to world markets for their favored industry.

These special interests, tired of having their goals rejected at the front door of public discourse, are now coming around the back door, using envy and "divide and conquer" tactics – such as half-truths about "big" vs. "small" farms and payment limitations – to pit non-farmer against farmer and farmer against farmer in order to kill U.S. farm policy. But, the vast majority of Americans will continue to support U.S. farm policy because, as an early Massachusetts farmer once said, "Facts are stubborn things."



*"Facts are stubborn things."*  
-President John Adams