

AGree Calls to Action Presidential Candidates

How Food and Ag Policy can Improve America's Health, Economy and Environment

Washington, DC (Jan. 13, 2016) – The right food and agricultural policies can improve the health of America's families, economy, farms and the environment, as outlined in recommendations AGree is presenting to presidential candidates. AGree's Call to Action provides core elements in a strategy for elevating food and agriculture as a national priority.

“Many people don't realize the degree to which food and agricultural policies shape our nation,” said Dan Glickman, AGree co-chair and former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. “Farmers and ranchers and the food and agriculture supply chain from “farm to fork” contribute roughly 5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and employ more than 12 million people, yet they face challenges with market volatility, drought, floods, disease, food safety, and a reliable labor supply. Policy changes are urgently needed to overcome these challenges.”

[AGree](#), a bipartisan group driving positive change in the food and agriculture system, has engaged more than 2,000 food and agricultural thought leaders to identify key issues and develop consensus recommendations to ensure American agriculture continues to thrive, providing the safest, most affordable food supply in the world. These recommendations are the basis of AGree's [Call to Action](#), being presented to campaigns on both sides of the aisle.

“Food and agriculture-related businesses contributed \$878 billion to the U.S. GDP in 2013, and it's critical to enact policy changes that will enable agriculture to continue to drive innovation, allow access to a stable workforce, protect the environment and empower future generations to provide safe, nutritious, affordable food,” said Jim Moseley, AGree co-chair and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

The Call to Action advocates smart policy changes to strengthen the food and agricultural sector, which, in turn, will strengthen our nation.

- **Strongly support research and innovation for food and agriculture.** [Research drives innovation](#) and agricultural research on weather volatility, obesity and water quality require greater focus, while addressing underfunding.
- **Ensuring a stable workforce through immigration reform.** Agriculture faces challenges of an unreliable labor supply and would be helped by a [simple, efficient and fair guest worker program](#) and a system through which citizenship can be earned by undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S.
- **Empowering the next generation to ensure a safe and affordable food supply.** The average age of U.S. farmers is 58 and [new entrants face enormous challenges](#), including land and equipment acquisitions.
- **Strengthening risk management policies and practices.** Balancing risk protection and costs, while integrating data on soil, yield risk and conservation practices are needed.

- **Bolstering conservation and working landscapes.** Regulations alone cannot ensure the [landscape-level actions needed](#), so policies that encourage producer-led, watershed-scale efforts involving the supply chain and demonstrating effectiveness and a measurable return on investment must be implemented.

Improving health and nutrition is a top priority for many American families and doing so can help reduce healthcare costs,” said Kathleen Merrigan, AGree co-chair and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. “More than 35 percent of American adults are obese, costing between \$147 billion to \$210 billion in healthcare costs annually. Food and agricultural policy reform can help to address these challenges.”

The additional changes outlined below can help to improve the health of Americans and address hunger worldwide, recognizing that nearly 800 million people do not have enough food to eat.

- **Improving Americans’ health and reducing health care costs through food & nutrition.** Child nutrition programs must improve and [policies must link food and diet to disease treatment and prevention](#).
- **Respond to changing consumer demands through local food.** Supporting local market development can contribute to [local job creation, environmental sustainability and improved nutrition, health, food access and equity](#).
- **Addressing global hunger and malnutrition through international development.** Global agricultural development is a [proven strategy for reducing hunger and poverty in developing countries](#) and supporting legislation that brings permanency to food security programs will help develop markets for U.S. goods.

“AGree has forged unprecedented common ground between farmers and ranchers, companies, researchers, environmentalists, doctors and nutritionists and other experts who understand the interconnected nature of food and agriculture systems globally,” says Emmy Simmons, AGree co-chair and former Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development. “We are committed to finding solutions and stand ready to serve as a resource to candidates interested in spurring transformative change.”

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AGree is supported by leading foundations that fund food and agriculture, international development, and health and well-being. To learn more about AGree visit www.foodandagpolicy.org or @AGreeAgPolicy on Twitter.