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**AGree Coalition Meets with Vilsack to Discuss Climate-Smart Programs, Policies**

*Outlines agenda for Farm Bill that prioritizes farmers and the environment*

Washington, DC – In May, the AGree Coalition, which includes farmers and ranchers from across the country, met with U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack in Washington, D.C. to discuss priorities as part of the newly expanded coalition’s annual meeting. AGree members urged Vilsack to continue USDA’s work on the climate-smart commodity program, integral agriculture data initiatives, and the importance of using crop insurance and conservation as tools for risk management.

The AGree Initiative, housed at the Meridian Institute, is a multi-stakeholder coalition of more than 50 farmers, ranchers, producers, researchers, food companies, former officers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), former Congressional staff, and NGO leadership. During the annual meeting, the Economic and Environmental Risk Coalition and the Climate, Food, and Agriculture Dialogue merged to become the AGree Initiative.

“We are eager to continue our work with Secretary Vilsack on data innovation, federal crop insurance, technical assistance, and other vital policy issues as we plan for the Farm Bill and beyond,” said Todd Barker, CEO of Meridian Institute. “Through collaboration and innovation, we can develop policies that benefit not only the agriculture sector but also the environment and society as a whole.”

AGree was launched in 2012 as a strategic bipartisan response to the challenge of feeding a growing global population healthy and nutritious food while conserving natural resources and sustaining farmers’ livelihoods. Bringing together a diverse group of leaders, AGree has forged a collective vision for the future of food and agriculture. Since its inception, it has developed bipartisan policy recommendations, hosted countless gatherings, and published dozens of reports that advance understanding about the benefits of conservation practices and the barriers to conservation that exist within federal policy. Most recently, AGree has overseen

[critical data pilots](#) and crop insurance proposal [developments](#) strengthening the body of evidence that conservation practices reduce risk.

For over a decade, AGree has advanced farmer-centered, data driven policy recommendations and pilot projects that recognize the connection between conservation practices, reduced agricultural risk, and improved environmental and financial performance. In its new iteration, the AGree Initiative, headed by Meridian Institute CEO Todd Barker, will continue to develop innovative and scalable policies and pilot programs that support farmers in improving agronomic and environmental outcomes while adapting to climate change.

“Being part of the AGree Initiative and participating in meetings like the one with Secretary Vilsack, allows me to ensure that the realities I’m facing on the farm are actually taken into consideration as policy is drafted,” said Kyle Bridgeforth a Partner of Bridgeforth Family Farms, a rowcrop farm in Alabama growing wheat, corn, soybeans, sorghum, and canola. “I know that implementing conservation practices on my land has helped mitigate my risk, both environmentally and financially.”

“Farmers, researchers, farm groups, food companies, NGOs, and policy experts all have different perspectives and experiences to bring to the table and I’m thankful that Secretary Vilsack took the time to hear from us. The AGree Initiative fosters collaboration so we can all learn from the successes and failures across different regions and production systems,” said Josette Lewis, Chief Scientific Officer of the Almond Board of California. “The pilot programs and scalable policies that the AGree Initiative has launched support farmers in transitioning towards a more climate-resilient food system.”

For more information and a full list of AGree Coalition members visit:

<https://foodandagpolicy.org/people/agree-coalition-member/>

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### **About The AGree Initiative**

AGree, an initiative of Meridian Institute, focuses on developing innovative and scalable policies and pilot programs that support farmers in improving agronomic and environmental outcomes while adapting to climate change. AGree partners believe there are real opportunities to use federal agricultural policy to incentivize and scale agricultural practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve soil health, and enhance water quality while reducing farmer costs and improving profitability.