

Information on Green Party Positions on Agriculture - 2005

Our current food system is dominated by centralized agribusiness and unsustainable practices that threaten our food security, degrade the environment, destroy communities, and squeeze out family farmers. Our so-called cheap food comes at the expense of the exploitation of our farmers along with the oppression of third world peoples, inhumane treatment of animals, pollution of air and water, and degradation of our land.

The agricultural system for the 21st Century must provide a high quality of life for farmers, nutritious and safe food for consumers, and reward farming methods that enhance the quality of water, soil, and air, and the beauty of the landscape.

1. We encourage legislation that assists new farmers and ranchers, that promotes widespread ownership to small and medium-sized farms and ranches, and that revitalizes and repopulates rural communities and promotes sustainable development and stewardship.
2. We support new farming and growing opportunities and urge the inclusion of non-traditional crops and foods in farm programs.
3. We advocate regionalizing our food system and decentralizing agriculture lands, production, and distribution. We encourage public support for producer and consumer cooperatives, community kitchens, Community Supported Agriculture, urban agriculture, and community farms and gardens.
4. We advocate the creation of a Food Policy Council composed of farmers, including small farmers and consumers, to oversee the USDA and all food policies at the local, state, and national level. This council should adjudicate conflicts of interest that arise when industries police themselves.
5. We support the highest organic standards (California Organic Certification Standards, for example). We advocate shifting price supports and government subsidies to organic food products so that they will be competitive with chemically produced food. We believe that everyone, not just the wealthy, must be able to afford safe and healthy food.
6. We urge the banning of sewage sludge or hazardous wastes as fertilizer, and of irradiation and the use of genetic engineering in all food production.
7. We would phase-out man-made pesticides and artificial fertilizers. We support Integrated Pest Management techniques and agro-ecology as alternatives to chemical-based agriculture.
8. Food prices ought to reflect the true cost of food, including the health effects of eating processed foods, antibiotic resistance, pesticide effects on growers and consumers, soil erosion, water pollution, pesticide drift, and air pollution. Indirect costs (loss of rural communities, a heavily subsidized transportation system, cost of the military necessary to defend cheap oil, and reduced security), though more difficult to calculate, should be factored into the cost of our highly centralized food system.
9. World hunger can best be addressed by food security - being self-sufficient for basic needs. Overpopulation is largely a consequence - not simply a cause - of poverty and environmental destruction, and all remedial actions must address living standards and food security through sustainable production.
10. Because of the tremendous amount of energy used in agriculture, we support farm subsidies to encourage the transition from dirty fuels to clean renewable energy as one of the most effective ways to move our country to a sustainable future.
11. We support legislation that provides energy and fuel conservation through rotational grazing, cover-crop rotations, nitrogen-fixing systems, and fuel-free, clean renewable energy development on the farm.
12. We encourage states to promote net-metering to make decentralized energy production economically viable.
13. Animal farming must be practiced in ethically and environmentally sustainable ways. Rapidly phase out the use of confined animal feeding operations and factory farms.
14. Applying the Precautionary Principle to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), we support a moratorium until safety can be demonstrated by independent (non-corporate funded), long-term tests for food safety, genetic drift, resistance, soil health, effects on non-target organisms, and cumulative interactions. Most importantly, we support the growing international demand to eliminate patent rights for genetic material, lifeforms, gene-splicing techniques, and biochemicals derived from them. This position is defined by the Treaty to Share the Genetic Commons, which is available through the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (www.iatp.org). The implications of corporate takeover and the resulting monopolization of genetic intellectual property by the bioengineering industry are immense.

[agriculture policy continued]

15. We support mandatory, full-disclosure food and fiber labeling. A consumer has the right to know the contents in their food and fiber, how they were produced, and where they come from. Labels should address the presence of GMOs, use of irradiation, pesticide application (in production, transport, storage, and retail), and the country of origin.

This adapted from the 2004 platform

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