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National Young Farmers Coalition Executive Director Lindsey Lusher Shute presents testimony urging Congress to strengthen support for young farmers

Federal policy and USDA programs make a difference for young farmers, and must be built upon to overcome obstacles ahead for rural America and the U.S. food system

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 25, 2017) – In testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry, Lindsey Lusher Shute, the executive director and co-founder of the [National Young Farmers Coalition](http://www.youngfarmers.org) (NYFC), called on Congress to continue to build momentum for the support of America’s young and beginning farmers.

“There are changes that young farmers need in the next farm bill, but my main point is really this: keep going,” said Shute. “There is significant momentum towards supporting young and beginning farmers, and we must build on it to overcome the many obstacles ahead for rural America and our food system.” Shute testified that federal policy and USDA programs are making a difference: actions by Congress, the USDA, service providers, and business leaders have improved access to training, credit, risk management, conservation opportunities, and even affordable farmland.

“Farming is a career that’s easy to love,” Shute told Committee members, “but to recruit the next generation of farmers, it must also provide a decent living.”

She noted that helping young people to enter farm careers is critical as the U.S. farm population ages. Many young Americans want to farm. For only the second time in the last century, the 2012 Census of Agriculture registered an increase in the number of farmers under 35 years old. Young farmers face new and heightened challenges, such as rising farmland real estate values, student loan debt, and limited access to health care and credit. In addition, many are first-generation farmers who don’t inherit land, equipment, or mentorship networks.

Since 2010, NYFC has launched 36 farmer-led chapters in 26 states, and built a grassroots base of 120,000 supporters. The only national group focused solely on young farmers, NYFC helps young farmers become leaders in their communities, and ensures young farmers a seat at the table within all levels of government.

View Shute’s full written testimony [here](#). Visit NYFC on the web at www.youngfarmers.org, and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

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