



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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After a month with no farm bill, one hundred young farmers fly to Washington DC to demand swift passage

WASHINGTON, DC (November 5, 2018)—Young farmers from across the country will convene on November 15th for Young Farmer Lobby Day on Capitol Hill. The Lobby Day is part of the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) 4th annual National Leadership Convergence. The 100 young farmer participants represent 41 local chapters of the National Young Farmers Coalition in 28 states.

With Congress having just returned for the “lame duck session” and a new Congress poised to start in January, all eyes will be on the farm bill. The 2014 farm bill expired on September 30th, and vital farm programs are suspended until a new bill is passed. Lobby day participants will meet with over 120 House and Senate offices to share how the farm bill programs are critical to their operations and why they need a new bill this year that supports young farmers.

Members of Congress confirmed to meet with young farmers include Senators Boozman (AR), Moran (KS), Reed (RI), Udall (NM), Isakson (GA), Lankford (OK), Grassley (IA), and Leahy (VT) and Representatives Faso (NY), Hice (GA), Norton (DC), Goodlatte (VA), Smith (WA), Womack (AR), Lujan Grisham (NM), Blum (IA), Loeb (IA), Pingree (ME), Emmer (MN), Peterson (MN), Welch (VT), Austin Scott (GA), and Tipton (CO).

Agriculture in the U.S. is at the demographic breaking point. Farmers over the age of 65 now outnumber farmers under 35 by a ratio of six to one, and U.S. farmland is overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of older farmers. USDA estimates that over the next five years—the lifespan of the next farm bill—nearly 100 million acres of U.S. farmland are expected to need a new farmer. **The next farm bill presents an opportunity to make young and beginning farmers a national priority—an opportunity we cannot miss.**

NYFC’s national policy director, Andrew Bahrenburg, says “Failure to pass a farm bill in 2018 could be disastrous for our nation’s young farmers and ranchers, many of whom rely on so-called

‘stranded’ farm bill programs that lack permanent mandatory baseline funding. Since the 2014 Farm Bill expired on September 30th, critical programs like the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) and Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) have ceased operation and are no longer serving farmers.”

Young farmers flying to Washington, DC include:

Jason Grimm, Grimm Family Farm – Third-generation Iowa farmer who grows dry beans, pastured poultry and produce, alongside his family’s calf cow operation.

Julia Asherman, Rag & Frass Farm –Vegetable and flower farmer who raises laying hens and ducks in Jeffersonville, GA.

Nate Brownlee, Nightfall Farm—Indiana young farmer who raises pastured livestock on his partner’s family land in Crothersville, Indiana.

Casey Holland, Red Tractor Farm—Albuquerque small farmer growing vegetables, herbs, and flowers and trains new farmers at Bernalillo County’s Grow the Growers program.

Nuri Icgoren, Urban Sprout Farms—Urban farmer in Atlanta who converted an abandoned motel into a thriving urban farm.

Joanna Winkler, Good Dog Farm—Food policy leader turned farmer in Parkton, Maryland.

Melony Edwards, Willowood Farm of Ebey’s Prairie—First-generation farmer on Whidbey Island, WA who started her food journey in the culinary and hospitality field.

Mike Nolan, Mountain Roots Produce—Vegetable farmer in the Mancos Valley of Colorado dedicated to soil health and being water resilient in his high desert climate.

Their top priority is to ask Congress to pass a farm bill before the end of the year that supports young farmers. They demand a farm bill that:

- Increases opportunities for training and assistance for underserved producers;
- Protects farmland and keeps it affordable for the next generation;
- Funds and improves access to USDA programs for young and beginning farmers;
- Expands local and regional markets for young farmers to access.

By passing these provisions in the next farm bill this year, Congress can inspire and support an entire generation of entrepreneurial young producers, protect the resources they steward, strengthen the communities they feed, and revitalize the rural economies they underpin.

The [National Young Farmers Coalition \(NYFC\)](#) is the only national advocacy organization focused solely on the needs of young and beginning farmers and ranchers. Since 2010, NYFC has built a grassroots base of over 140,000 supporters and launched 41 farmer-led chapters in 28 states. NYFC helps young farmers become leaders in their communities, and ensures young farmers a seat at the table within all levels of government.

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