



2021 PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG FARMER POLICY PRIORITIES

*The **National Young Farmers Coalition** is a network of more than 200,000 farmers, ranchers, and supporters building a brighter and more equitable future for U.S. agriculture. Since 2010, the Coalition has launched 48 farmer-led chapters across the United States. We help young farmers become leaders in their communities through local chapter organizing and ensuring they have a seat at the table in local, state, and national policy discussions.*

We tackle the most critical structural and economic issues that prevent motivated young people from starting and growing farm businesses.

To ensure a brighter future for the next generation of farmers, public agricultural policies in the state must be in service of all who identify as farmers. Farmers of color face added structural and economic challenges, and our policy work must be underpinned by a thoughtful racial equity analysis. Policies must be informed by the lived experiences of farmers across the state, and must reflect the diversity of that broad community while prioritizing the voices of those most marginalized from policy processes. We urge Pennsylvania policy makers to consider the following recommendations for policy change.

Investing in Farmers and Farm Workers

Agricultural Workforce Development

We recommend that Pennsylvania establish a grant program that could support on-farm learning opportunities (such as apprenticeships) for farmers early in their career through a cost-sharing model that would help cover the costs associated with providing meaningful training. We also recommend that this grant program include a set-aside for BIPOC-led farms and frontline organizations. A model for this program can be found in Colorado.

Driver's Licenses for All

We recommend that the Pennsylvania's General Assembly pass HB 279, which will allow immigrants to use an IRS-issued tax ID number (ITIN) and/or a combination of documents proving their identity instead of a social security number when applying for a standard state drivers license as well as promoting safer roads, keeping families together, and protecting the privacy of all Pennsylvania residents and drivers.

Investing in Equity in Pennsylvania Agriculture

We recommend that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania General Assembly take significant steps to accelerate the state's efforts to include Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) farmers in its policies and programs. Frontline agricultural and food systems organizations and BIPOC farmers have been leading this work for generations in Pennsylvania and should be listened to and compensated in this work. Helpful models of this work can be found in California and Vermont.



Investing in Farmland

Urban Agriculture Grant Program

We celebrate the creation of the Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant and recommend an increase to funding for this program and changes including: prioritizing and/or setting aside funding specifically for BIPOC-led projects, removing matching fund requirements for individual proposals, additional allowance for direct project hours (staff and volunteer) to count as a match for larger collaborative grants, and providing funds upfront instead of in reimbursement for complete projects.

Implementation of the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit

We celebrate the creation of the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit and recommend exploring administrative options to incentivize longer term leases, such as prioritizing applications with leases of at least five years. We also recommend prioritizing the applications of land and asset owners who are leasing or selling to BIPOC farmers and considering other options to address racial equity in the outreach for and administration of this program. We would also like to expand the program to include tax credits specifically for young and beginning and BIPOC farmers, to ease the burden of various costs related to land access and transition.

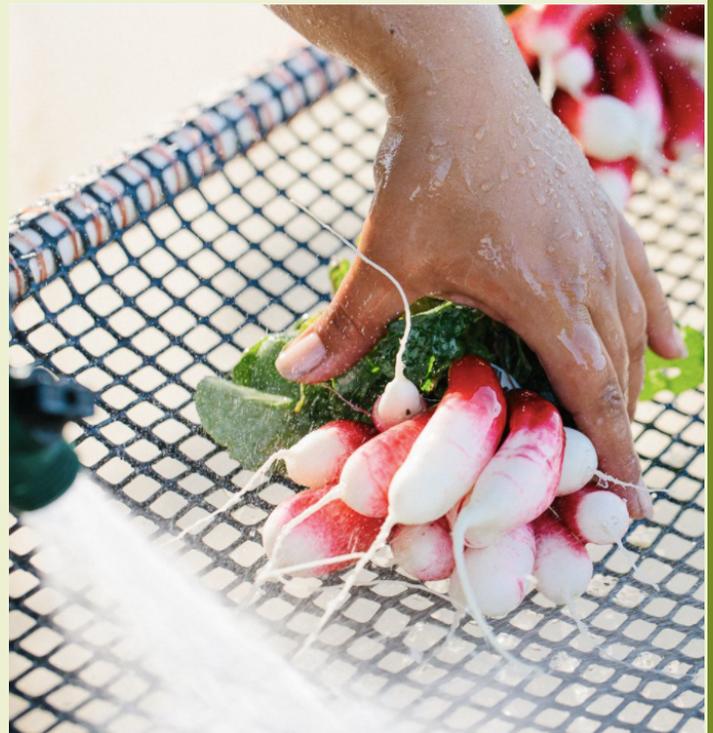
Farmland Preservation Updates

We recommend that the Commonwealth recognize working farm easements as an essential tool in the Commonwealth's farmland preservation toolbox that can improve land access opportunities by protecting affordability specifically for farmers, prioritizing applications that include working farm easements, and allocating funding to retroactively place these provisions on existing easements. We also recommend prioritizing applications of and/or sets aside funding specifically for land owned by or transferred to BIPOC farmers.

We also recommend three key changes under the farmland potential criteria within the farmland preservation regulation: removing the size of the land tract as a required factor; adding BIPOC ownership or current stewardship; and adding distance from population centers.

Support for Soil Health Practices

We recommend that Pennsylvania establish a soil health program to provide payments, grants and other financial assistance to rural and urban agricultural producers and nonprofit organizations for technical assistance and peer-to-peer training, and for maintaining, implementing, and innovating conservation agricultural management practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases and improve soil health. The program should recognize the expertise and historical contributions of BIPOC farmers to soil health practices, and should prioritize engaging BIPOC in each aspect of the program.



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Young Farmers Podcast

The National Young Farmers Coalition www.youngfarmers.org