

# Seattle Farm Bill Principles

## Supporting Healthy Farms, Food and People Guidance for the 2012 Farm Bill

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Go to [www.seattlefarmbillprinciples.org](http://www.seattlefarmbillprinciples.org)

### → **1 Health-centered Food System**

The driving principle of the Farm Bill must be the relationship of food and ecologically sound agriculture to public health. Food that promotes health includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, dairy, and lean protein. Improving the health of the nation's residents must be a priority in developing policies, programs, and funding.

### → **2 Sustainable Agricultural Practices**

Promote farming systems and agricultural techniques that prioritize the protection of the environment so that the soil, air, and water will be able to continue producing food long into the future. Integral to both domestic and global agricultural policies should be agricultural techniques and farming practices that enhance environmental quality, build soil and soil fertility, protect natural resources and ecosystem diversity, improve food safety, and increase the quality of life of communities, farmers and farm workers.

### → **3 Community and Regional Prosperity and Resilience**

Enhance food security by strengthening the viability of small and mid-scale farms, and increasing appropriately scaled processing facilities, distribution networks, and direct marketing. Develop strategies that foster resiliency, local innovation, interdependence, and community development in both rural and urban economies. Opportunities that create fair wage jobs are key to a strong economy.

### → **4 Equitable Access to Healthy Food**

Identify opportunities and reduce barriers by developing policies and programs that increase the availability of and improve the proximity of healthy, affordable, and culturally-relevant food to urban, suburban, and rural populations. Protect the nation's core programs that fight food insecurity and hunger while promoting vibrant, sustainable agriculture.

### → **5 Social Justice and Equity**

The policies reflected in the Farm Bill impact the lives and livelihoods of many people, both in the U.S. as well as abroad. Develop policies, programs, and strategies that support social justice, worker's rights, equal opportunity, and promote community self-reliance.

### → **6 Systems Approach to Policymaking**

It is essential to reduce compartmentalization of policies and programs, and to approach policy decisions by assessing their impact on all aspects of the food system including production, processing, distribution, marketing, consumption, and waste management. Consider the interrelated effects of policies and align expected outcomes to meet the goal of a comprehensive health-focused food system.

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## Get Educated

A few resources that provide education and information about the Farm Bill.

[www.nwfoodfight.org](http://www.nwfoodfight.org)

[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

[www.cornucopia.org](http://www.cornucopia.org)

[www.farmpolicy.com](http://www.farmpolicy.com)

[www.foodandwaterwatch.org](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org)

[www.agobservatory.org/issue\\_farmbill.cfm](http://www.agobservatory.org/issue_farmbill.cfm)

<http://sustainableagriculture.net>



**The Seattle Farm Bill Principles were initiated by Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin as part of the Seattle Local Food Action Initiative. [http://www.seattle.gov/council/conlin/food\\_initiative.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/council/conlin/food_initiative.htm)**

**The founding co-signers include civic leaders in Seattle and Washington farmers who believe it is important to create a healthy food system, strengthen the connections between our urban, suburban and rural communities, and support sustainable agriculture.**

## **Founding Co-Signers**

Richard Conlin, President, Seattle City Council

Denis Hayes, President Bullitt Foundation, National Coordinator of the first Earth Day

James Kelly, CEO, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

Dr. David Fleming, Director, Public Health Seattle-King County

Mary Embleton, Executive Director, Cascade Harvest Coalition

Trudy Bialic, Public Affairs Director, PCC Natural Markets

Fred Fleming and Karl Kupers, Co-founders of Shepherd's Grain

Reverend Dr. Robert L. Jeffrey, Executive Director, Clean Greens

Siri Erickson-Brown, Co-owner, Local Roots Farm

Dr. David R. Montgomery, MacArthur Fellow and author, DIRT: The Erosion of Civilizations

Andrew Stout, CEO-Founder, Full Circle Farm

Affiliations for identification purposes only

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# WHY SEATTLE CARES ABOUT THE FARM BILL

Seattle, along with other municipalities, faces multiple health, social, and environmental problems connected to food. In 2007, up to 11% of adults in Seattle ran out of food. In 2008, the incidence of obesity in King County adults was 21% and that of overweight adults was 54%. In 2006, the annual attributable cost of diabetes was estimated at \$1.025 million. Overweight and obesity are significant risk factors for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic diseases. Supporting public health and protecting our environment are essential to the viability and livability of our city and hence our economy.



Improving nutrition and reducing hunger are not only moral concerns, but are critical for decreasing social vulnerability, for increasing the capacity of children to learn, and for improving economic opportunity. In Seattle 42% of public school students are enrolled to receive free or reduced meals. In the last two years many of our food banks reported an increase of clientele of 50% or more. The current quality of food is insufficient to meet health needs. We cannot be complacent about poor diet and lack of access to fresh, high quality, healthy food.

Agriculture represents an important part of both rural and urban economies. According to United States Department of Agriculture 2007 Census Data, farms in the 12 Puget Sound counties had sales of \$1.1 billion. Yet, farmland, farms, and farmers are at risk because of policy barriers and inadequate infrastructure and the region is still losing farmland. There is a demonstrated need for regionally-appropriate technology and infrastructure that can address market barriers and create food industry jobs.

People increasingly understand that food is connected not only to health, but the environment, climate change, and the economy. Access to healthy food is increased when local and regional food production, processing, distribution and retail work together to build strong markets for healthy foods. There is a growing awareness that our urban and rural communities are mutually interdependent and that the regional food economy can create stable jobs within our communities.

Maintaining and improving the security of a diverse food supply is essential to local emergency preparedness and regional self-reliance. New coordination across city, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as between government, civil society, and businesses is needed to allow communities greater flexibility to plan and take action for strong and diverse food systems in every region.

The current food system has led to an unsustainable reliance on chemical inputs and cheap oil for production and distribution and the paradox of simultaneous increases in both obesity and chronic hunger. The current food system externalizes a host of environmental problems. Sustainable agricultural practices need to be more broadly supported and applied and reliance on oil must be reduced.

The policies, programs, and funding included in the 2012 Farm Bill will affect how successful Seattle can be in achieving our goal of improving our local food system and in doing so, advance the City's interrelated Comprehensive Plan goals of environmental sustainability, economic development, public health, race and social justice, and emergency preparedness. Local government has an important role to play in creating a healthy food system, but federal policies and actions significantly impact Seattle's ability to fully realize these goals.

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## Possible Implementation Actions

### Health-centered Food System

Implementation actions could include:

- Realign farm subsidies to more closely reflect the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans established by U.S. Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture
- Support integration of nutrition programs to fight hunger and food insecurity directly with local and regional agriculture
- Improve nutrition quality through making locally and regionally grown healthy food more accessible through removing obstacles and restrictions and supporting policies that expand scale appropriate production and marketing
- Support Farm-to-School programs including school gardens and food and agriculture education, as well as Farm-to-Institution (e.g., prisons, hospitals, worksite cafeterias) programs and provide assistance in outreach, coordination, direct purchasing, and training
- Prioritize food procurement and pricing policies that favor healthy food choices
- Support research, data collection and innovation oriented to fruit and vegetable production and marketing from diverse scaled farm operations, including those found in urban, peri-urban and rural areas
- Provide adequate funding for crop insurance and disaster assistance for loan programs and grants that focus on fruit, vegetable, and specialty crops as well as small and medium scale meat, dairy, wild fish, and poultry production

### Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Implementation actions could include:

- Implement policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to natural disasters and climate change (e.g., through re-building soil carbon content and fertility)
- Strengthen policies that conserve water, land, and energy and minimize environmental damage to soil, water, air, and animal and marine life
- Minimize use of pesticides, herbicides and promote ecologically sound farming methods
- Increase opportunities for funding, research, programs, and innovation in ecologically sound agricultural practices and their effect on public health
- Develop integrative approaches to environmental protection that enhances the viability of sustainable agriculture
- Develop incentives for farmers who utilize ecologically sound farming practices

## **Community and Regional Prosperity**

### **Implementation actions could include:**

- Increase opportunities for funding, research, and programs in urban and peri-urban agriculture to increase community food security
- Expand and enhance diversity of opportunities for producers of healthy food sold directly to consumers and support market development projects
- Create fair wage jobs in production, processing, distribution, marketing and food preparation
- Promote local small and medium sized farm viability by strengthening farmland protection, and expanding technical assistance programs to small and medium sized farms that grow healthy food
- Support rural development, outreach and beginner farmers programs
- Support, promote, and protect fruit, vegetable, specialty crop, meat, dairy, wild fish, and poultry production, marketing, distribution and processing and identify and reduce barriers to the availability of locally produced food
- Support and fund investments in appropriately scaled infrastructure that supports small and mid-sized farms and facilities

## **Equitable Access to Healthy Food**

### **Implementation actions could include:**

- Support opportunities that ensure that nutritious and culturally appropriate food is accessible to everyone
- Protect the integrity and funding of the nation's core nutrition programs, especially WIC, SNAP, TEFAP and the National School Lunch Program
- Maximize opportunities and reduce barriers for federal nutrition programs to provide increased access to fresh fruit and vegetables
- Promote use of WIC and SNAP benefits at direct-to-consumer marketing outlets

## **Social Justice and Equity**

### **Implementation actions could include:**

- Increase opportunities and programs that support new farmers especially those that farm small and medium sized farms
- Increase opportunities and programs that assist farm workers to transition into farm owners
- Provide transparent, fair and equitable access, planning, and reporting processes to immigrant, non-English speaking, poor and socially disadvantaged farmers
- Advance safe and humane working conditions for workers in the food system
- Develop and implement policies which protect the health of farmers, farm workers, and food system workers from chemicals and hazardous working conditions
- Support removal of policy barriers to the development of viable local and regional agriculture in developing countries, retooling investment, aid, and development policy to support internal farm to market infrastructure in every region and country

## **Systems Approach to Policymaking**

### **Implementation actions could include:**

- Integrate national goals for health, economic viability, and environmental protection into upcoming national food, farm, and environmental policy
- Assess the impact of policies in the Farm Bill on public health goals as well as on maximizing production of fruit, vegetables, and nuts
- Develop approaches that increase consumer demand for healthy food crops
- Support supply chains that contribute to the growth and stability of the regional food system and production and distribution of healthy food
- Support Food Policy Councils and networks as mechanisms for developing local and state food system policy that effectively integrates all sectors of a healthy food system