

## National Family Farm Coalition

### FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

*Join the local, national  
and international movement  
to regain control of our food and farm system*

## Food Sovereignty: Putting Farmers First

ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT THEY EAT and to ensure that agriculture in their community is fair and healthy for everyone. This is the basic principle behind food sovereignty, a new concept that family farmers are embracing around the world. If you're a farmer who wants to support domestic food security by producing healthy food at a fair price and you believe that farmers should have the first right to local and regional markets, then food sovereignty is for you.

The global food and farm system is broken. In the middle of one of the most productive agricultural periods ever, farmers can't earn a fair price for what they raise. Meanwhile, more than 850 million people around the world go hungry every day and the environmental degradation caused by industrial farming is spreading across the globe and creeping into our own backyards.

Profits for a few seed, agrichemical and food processing corporations outweigh the needs of all of the rest of us. The system no longer values healthy, delicious food, productive and sustainable rural communities or people's right to make decisions about how to run their communities and their farms.

The National Family Farm Coalition, an advocacy group that represents family farm organizations nationwide, is a member of the Via Campesina, the largest international movement of family farmer, fisher, forester and indigenous groups in the world. Together, they are working on local, national and international projects and policies to defend food sovereignty, the right of all people to choose where and how their food is produced.

***"We're not just a little group in Wisconsin or D.C., we're part of an international coalition that's going to have a say in setting food policy at the international level."*** —JOEL GREENO, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN RAW MILK PRODUCERS PRICING ASSOCIATION; EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, NFFC

## Food Sovereignty Starts With You

**NAME:** Joel Greeno, Greeno Acres

**HOMETOWN:** Kendall, Wisconsin

**OCCUPATION:** Family farmer—dairy (raw milk)

**FARMING:** 15 years. The Greenos were farming in Scotland before emigrating more than 100 years ago.

**ORGANIZATION:** American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association



**“FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS ABOUT FAIR TRADE, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, ALL THAT, BUT IT REALLY STARTS WITH YOU—WHERE YOU BUY YOUR FOOD, HOW YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR. IT'S THAT SIMPLE.”**

### *Earning a fair price*

Joel works to secure a fair price for raw milk producers in addition to facilitating seminars on sustainable bio-fuel and rotational grazing for farmers.

### *How food sovereignty helps*

Joel helped found Scenic Central Dairy Cooperative which has grown from 16 to 200 farmers in 10 years. Scenic Central secures a price that is 25-40 cents more per hundredweight than the nearest competitor. For a dairy farmer with 50 cows this could mean an additional \$3,600 a year.

## Farmers Helping Farmers

**NAME:** Ben Burkett, B&B Farm

**HOMETOWN:** Petal, Mississippi

**OCCUPATION:** Family farmer—collard greens, okra, squash, cabbage, watermelon and timber  
Father of 1 child



**FARMING:** 33 years. 4th generation farmer.

**ORGANIZATIONS:** Mississippi Association of Cooperatives;  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives

**“I’VE BEEN A FARMER FOR 33 YEARS.  
I’VE MADE A GOOD LIVING AND I NEVER  
WANTED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE.”**

### *Gaining access to local markets*

Ben increases access to nutritious and affordable food for low-income Mississippians by creating local market opportunities for family farmers.

### *How food sovereignty helps*

A Hurricane Katrina survivor, Ben works with farmers across the country to provide relief to people affected by the storm. When Katrina hit farms along the Gulf Coast a network of farmers responded with supplies and volunteers within three days.

## Local Food for Local Markets

**NAME:** Dena Hoff, Sand Creek Farm

**HOMETOWN:** Glendive, Montana

**OCCUPATION:** Family farmer—sheep, cattle, alfalfa, corn, beans, sugar beets, okra, apples, berries  
Mother of 4 children



**FARMING:** 27 years. “I always knew I wanted to be a farmer.”

**ORGANIZATION:** Northern Plains Resource Council

**“MY FIRST RULE OF FARMING IS TO FEED YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY. FORGET NATIONAL PRODUCTION, FORGET ABOUT PRODUCTION FOR EXPORT. ALL THAT MEANS NOTHING IF YOU CAN’T FEED YOURSELF AND HELP FEED YOUR NEIGHBORS.”**

### *First right to markets*

Dena works to put local food in its rightful, exalted place by starting a community kitchen and a farm-to-table restaurant. She is putting into action the concept that local farmers should have the first right to local and regional markets while providing healthy, nutritious food to consumers.

### *How food sovereignty helps*

The community kitchen will provide space for making, processing and marketing local food, adding value for farmers and helping break corporate control over the market.



# FARMERS' VOICES

*"Family farmers around the world are like canaries in the mine shaft. The rest of the world had better start listening."* GEORGE NAYLOR, U.S.

*"What we want is simple: to live in dignity from our agricultural production."* MARIAM SISSOKO, MALI

*"Why do they want to turn our mother earth into merchandise, into a source of profit, not a source of life?"* GILMA BENINTEZ, COLOMBIA

*"Those who are against food sovereignty have the power of money, but we have something even stronger: the power of hope and the power of unity."* BADRUL ALAM, BANGLADESH

*"We can't depend upon government assistance. The real answer lies in coalition building and farmers working together to save each other."* RANDY JASPER, U.S.



## Farmers Around the World Working Together

**NAME:** Mariam Sissoko

**HOMETOWN:** Samé, Mali, West Africa

**OCCUPATION:** Family farmer—garden vegetables, millet, okra, goats and cattle  
Mother of 9 children

**FARMING:** “I was born a farmer and my family has been farming forever.”

**ORGANIZATIONS:** Coordination of Women of Samé, Mali;  
Via Campesina International



**“I COULD NOT IMAGINE THAT FARMERS IN THE U.S. HAVE PROBLEMS LIKE US. IN A WAY, THIS GIVES ME GREAT HOPE. THEY WANT US TO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN’T WORK TOGETHER BECAUSE WE’RE TOO DIFFERENT. NOW I KNOW THE OPPOSITE TO BE TRUE.”**

### *Unity*

Mariam organizes women farmers in northern Mali to plant crops for healthy food and an independent source of income. She has planned national and international forums on food sovereignty.

### *How food sovereignty helps*

Mariam works with women whose husbands had to leave them and village life in search of work. Food sovereignty helped her recognize that the problems of her community were not isolated incidents, but affecting farmers and rural communities everywhere.

## Organizing and Advocating

**NAME:** George Naylor, Naylor Farm

**HOMETOWN:** Churdan, Iowa

**OCCUPATION:** Family farmer—corn, soybeans, apples  
Father of 2 children

**FARMING:** 30 years, 3rd generation farmer

**ORGANIZATION:** Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement



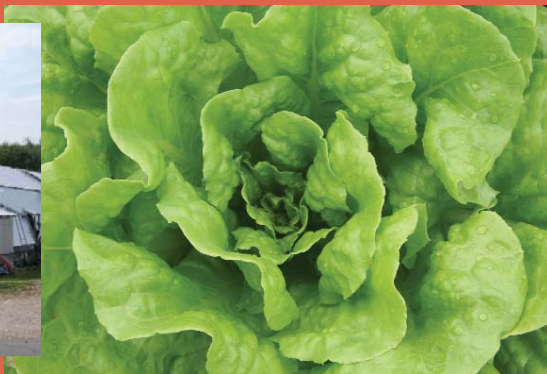
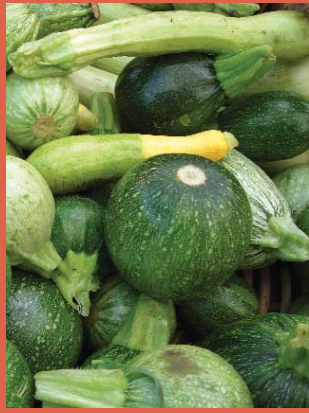
**“A SIGN IN IOWA READS, ‘IOWAN FARMERS FEED THE WORLD.’ IT REALLY MEANS ‘IOWAN FARMERS FEED CORPORATE PIGS.’ WE NEED REAL SOLUTIONS THAT DO NOT GIVE CORPORATIONS CONTROL OVER OUR FOOD SUPPLY AND PRODUCE FOOD DAMAGING TO OUR HEALTH. THE WHOLE FABRIC OF RURAL LIFE—AND OUR ENTIRE SOCIETY—IS AT STAKE.”**

### *Making global trade work for farmers*

As the president of the NFFC, George brings family farmers’ voices to national and international meetings where farm and food policies are set.

### *How food sovereignty helps*

George’s vocal participation at international trade meetings has meant that the need for a fair price for farmers and a farmers’ bill of rights remain a key part of the debate.



# EVERY FARMER CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

## What You Can Do

*Farmers around the world see firsthand the disastrous consequences of our current agricultural system. They also lead the way in finding better ways to do things. From learning healthier ways to farm their own land to participating in the reform of national and international food and farm policy, there is an opportunity for every family farmer to be a part of the solution.*

**Building farm to cafeteria projects** to bring locally-grown food into school lunch programs: It encourages children to eat healthily while buying from independent, small-scale farmers.

**Creating an alternative to the U.S. Farm Bill:** The NFFC's proposed Food from Family Farms Act is designed to ensure fair prices for family farmers and healthy food for rural communities here and around the world.

**Neighbor to neighbor:** Farmers responded to Hurricane Katrina by sending tractors, volunteers and thousands of pounds of food and medicine to communities on the Gulf Coast.

**Each one teach one:** U.S. farmers travel across Africa, Europe, Central America, Asia and the Middle East and host family farmers from abroad to share organizing, policy and farming techniques.

**Farmers' voices are shaping international trade debates:** Grassroots International, in partnership with the NFFC and the Via Campesina, is bringing farmers to the table to demand trade and agricultural policies that respect farmers' rights and acknowledge farmers' contributions to the food system.

**Join the movement for food sovereignty—call the National Family Farm Coalition at 202.543.5675.**

## NFFC FOOD SOVEREIGNTY VISION STATEMENT

*We envision empowered communities everywhere working together democratically to advance a food system that ensures health, justice and dignity for all... Farmers, ranchers, and fishers will have control over their lands, water, seeds, and livelihoods [and] all people will have access to healthy, local, delicious food.*

For more information about how you can be a part of making this vision a reality, contact the NFFC at:

110 Maryland Avenue, NE Ste 307  
Washington, DC, 20002  
phone 202.543.5675



[www.nffc.net](http://www.nffc.net)

