

2020 Save Family Farming's Guide To Farm Friendly Policies



Farmworker jobs are threatened.

Union activists are trying to stop 25,000 guest workers from helping harvest our crops. Our farmers already pay the highest farm wages in the nation and farmworkers have the most stringent protections of any worker group. We will lose farms and crops if more unnecessary labor costs are added.



Protect fish and farms against urbanization.

The Nooksack river system is one of the least populated areas in the Puget Sound and offers significant opportunities for salmon recovery. State plans to have courts settle water rights will end positive recovery and cooperative negotiations. Loss of habitat and toxins from urbanization will be made far worse by these plans.

Beyond our great cities are our great family farms.

Washington state is a remarkably productive place to farm, providing food for our communities, region and the world.

But, the future of our farms is far from secure. Here are important policy positions aimed at making Washington a safer place to farm. Ask candidates you support if they will help ensure the future of family farming by publicly endorsing these positions.

1. Protect farmworkers and valuable jobs on Washington farms.
2. Protect fish by keeping farming viable including access to water.
3. Support the state's role in enforcing environmental regulations.
4. Enforce wildlife rules to protect children, homes and farms.
5. Listen to farmers, not just those seeking to harm or end farming.



Protect farmworkers and their Jobs

Washington farmers pay the highest farm wages in the nation and labor costs keep rising. We're importing more of our fresh fruit and vegetables from countries where farmers pay a fraction of what Washington farmers pay and without the extensive worker protections or food safety laws. State leaders need to reject calls to stop farmworker jobs or add more unnecessary regulations and costs. Farmers need policies that support competitiveness, not make it ever harder to compete.



Protect fish and farms against urban habitat loss and pollution

Urban growth represents the greatest threat to salmon recovery through habitat loss and urban pollution. Viable farms are essential to protect against this expansion in the Puget Sound. But we are losing farmland at alarming rates with over 60% already lost. State plans to turn water access needed for farming over to the courts would be a disaster for fish and farms. It would end years of positive work by farmers to improve habitat and help restore salmon. It would replace the cooperative efforts that have proved effective for a multi-decade litigious process that will create adversaries where partnerships now exist. The outcome almost certainly would cause rapid increase of urban growth in one of the last remaining viable farming areas in Puget Sound.



The state's remaining family dairy farmers threatened by unchallenged litigation.

One by one an Oregon attorney is suing Washington's 300-plus remaining family dairy farms. We are losing farms because the Department of Ecology stands by and allows this to happen without defending the state's environmental regulations. We have very strict rules that allow for zero discharge from farms. State leaders need to demand courts recognize that state regulations, not out-of-state attorneys, protect the environment.

Photo: Fourth generation dairy farmer Larry Stap with his hopefully sixth generation dairy farmer grandson at their dairy near Lynden, Washington. The farm's future is threatened by proposed state action on water rights and lack of action supporting state environmental regulations.

Ask your candidate to sign this:

I support family farmers in Washington state and commit to helping make our state safe for farming, including endorsing the positions listed here.

Name

Position or seat

Date

Signed



Protect dairy farmers against litigation by defending environmental regulations

Washington state has some of the most stringent dairy regulations allowing for zero pollution. But the state stands by while an Oregon attorney uses court action to rewrite the state's environmental regulations in ways that would allow no dairies to operate. The state needs to ensure that courts allow the state permit to protect water quality—not an attorney seeking to end dairy farming.



Require the Department of Fish and Wildlife to protect children, homes and farms against improperly located elk.

Everyone loves wildlife and elk are magnificent. But they don't belong in current numbers in the Skagit Valley with homes, farms and schools any more than they belong in a downtown city park. State leaders concerned about safety and farms will take action.



Listen to farmers, not just those committed to ending farming in our state.

State leaders too often have refused to meet with and listen to farmers to learn how they are protecting farmworkers or how they are pro-actively working to protect salmon. Radical voices intent on ending farming should not dictate state policy. Engaging with farmers is the first step to farm-friendly policies.



Support the future of family farming in Washington state

Save Family Farmers is the unified voice of family farmers across the state. Since 2015 we have been advocating for the future of farmers through public outreach. Go to savefamilyfarming.org and consider supporting this important mission.