



**FAMILY FARM ACTION**

**\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Family Farm Action Rallies Farmers Around A Bill of Rights In Storm Lake Iowa**

**What:** Family Farm Action will host a rally of farmers from across the country representing a broad group of organizations.

**When/Where:** March 30th at 10:30 AM in High School Gymnasium Storm Lake IA.

**Who:** Organizations slated to speak include The Organization for Competitive Markets, Wisconsin Farmers Union, National Black Farmers Association, American Grassfed Association and, the National Family Farm Coalition. Additional interview opportunities include JD Scholten 2018 candidate for the Iowa 4th Congressional District, Jennifer Fahy Farm Aid Inc and Wes Shoemyer family farmer/former Missouri State Senator.

Family Farm Action Board Member Wes Shoemyer said “Farmers and ranchers across this country are fed up. It’s time for reform, and we have outlined a set of values in our Farmers Bill of Rights that are reasonable. Things like the right to fair and open markets or the right to protect our natural resources are fundamental.”

Family Farm Action is calling on politicians in Washington DC and State Houses across the country to pledge reforms guided by the Farmers Bill of Rights. It’s time to revitalize our rural communities by investing in family farmers and small businesses that respect the land, animals, and their neighbors.

Please [RSVP Here](#)

**###**



# FAMILY FARM ACTION

## Family Farm Action Farmers Bill of Rights Rally Press Packet

### Family Farm Actions Farmers Bill of Rights

#### **Right to Fair, Open Markets**

There must be open competition in the marketplace to buy seeds, fertilizer and other goods — and to sell produce, livestock, and meat in an open marketplace. It has become nearly impossible for independent farmers, processors, seed suppliers, mechanics, and other rural businesses to compete with multinational monopolies. We need strong anti-trust safeguards.

#### **Right to Feed Our Community**

As multi-national corporations have taken control of the food system, they have shuttered independent processing and distribution businesses locking farmers out of their local market and denying U.S. consumers local and regional foods.

#### **Right to Fair Capital**

With the loss of community and regional banks coupled with the extraction of the wealth in our rural communities by large corporations, farmers and local businesses cannot access the capital necessary to operate. We must ensure that all farmers, regardless of background, can access the credit/capital they need.

#### **Right to Protect Our Natural Resources**

If a giant corporation wants to buy up land and operate a mega-farm, they should give the same care to the soil, earth, and water as our family farmers have for generations. Corporate megafarms should have to follow reasonable standards for aquifer use, manure storage, and other land-use guidelines.

#### **Right to Local Control of our Land**

Counties and other local governments should have the ability to pass and enforce ordinances regulating the size, placement and scope of mega-farms to protect the value of family farmers' land and the surrounding environment.

#### **Right to Food Security**

Foreign ownership hurts family farmers and raises serious national security concerns. A strict cap on foreign ownership of farms, farmland, and agribusinesses should be set to ensure our right to food security.

#### **Right to Repair**

Huge corporations and their Wall Street backers have gone so far as to prevent local businesses and farmers from fixing their own tractors and equipment, forcing them to pay corporate technicians to make all repairs. A farmer should have the right to fix his own equipment as he or she sees fit.

#### **Right to Transparent Labeling**

A farmer should be able to label their food accurately and transparently — including strong country of origin labeling standards.

#### **Right to Rural Opportunity**

Monopolies have hollowed out local economies and taken away the traditional pathways of opportunity for free enterprise that helped communities thrive. No farmer should have to choose between continuing to operate their farm and getting access to good schools and health care. No farmer should have to choose between farming and providing a future for their children. Farmers need the right to basic services in rural communities.

## Rally Speakers

### **Family Farm Action Board Member Wes Shoemyer**

**Bio:** Wes Shoemyer is a third-generation family farmer in North Central Missouri where he raises grain and livestock. Senator Shoemyer served as a Missouri State Representative and State Senator where he was a champion for family farmers and took on multinational agribusiness. He was a leading voice in opposition to Missouri's Right to Farm Amendment serving as president of Missouri Food for America. Wes now serves as a board member and leading advocate for Family Farm Action.

**Organization Profile:** We are a coalition of family-farmers and advocates building the "political muscle" to fight for farmers and rural communities. Existing political organizations have aligned themselves with industrial corporate agriculture. Family Farm Action will be a progressive voice fighting to protect America's family farms and rural communities from multinational agribusiness monopolies that are destroying rural economies and way of life. We'll "get political" — presenting polling and research, pushing state-level legislation, and campaigning for initiatives and pro-family farmer candidates.

**Supporting Quote Wes Shoemyer:** "Farmers and ranchers across this country are fed up. It's time for reform, and we have outlined a set of values in our Farmers Bill of Rights that are reasonable. Things like the right to fair and open markets or the right to protect our natural resources are fundamental."

### **Organization for Competitive Markets Chris Petersen OCM Board Member**

**Bio:** Chris has been involved in production agriculture for 40 years. He maintains a 30-sow Berkshire herd on his farm near Clear Lake, Iowa. When Chris began farming, he grew corn and soybeans on 400 acres. But the farm depression of the 1980s forced changes in his family's approach to farming and kindled his desire to become an advocate for family farmers. Chris is a board member of the Organization for Competitive Markets. Chris also sits on the University of Minnesota's Animal Husbandry Committee and has been appointed to the Obama Administration's Agricultural Air Quality Task Force. Chris and his wife, Kristi, have two grown children and two grandchildren.

**Organization Profile:** Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) is a national, nonprofit, membership-based public policy research and advocacy organization headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska. OCM was founded in 1998 by farmers, ranchers, attorneys, agricultural economists, rural sociologists, and state legislators to challenge the growing income power disparities between agricultural producers and agribusinesses in the food system.

**Supporting Quote Chris Peterson** "Organization for Competitive Markets strongly supports the Farmers Bill of Rights. As an organization representing independent family agriculture, OCM works to restore the rights and liberties of family farmers, ranchers and their rural communities through open and fair markets."

### **Working Hero J.D. Scholten**

**Bio:** A 5th generation Iowan, J.D. Scholten was the 2018 Democratic nominee against Rep. Steve King in Iowa's 4th District. He received nationwide attention for his strong grassroots campaign, falling just 3 points short in a district that Donald Trump won by 27 points in 2016. He grew up in Sioux City. After college J.D. went on to work as a paralegal before he launched his congressional campaign., J.D. is the State Director for Working Hero, an antipoverty nonprofit that focuses on raising awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

**Organization Profile:** It's about time that working people had a lobbyist, someone working for them, and THAT'S what Working Hero PAC is all about. In 2018, Working Hero endorsed 17 progressive candidates committed to making work pay better and supporting policies that help Americans afford life's basic needs. Working Hero traveled the country giving ground support and mobilizing supporters on social media while elevating the issue of poverty in the election.

**Supporting Quote J.D. Scholten:** "Working Hero Iowa supports the Rally for the Farmer's Bill of Rights because we realize the economic hardships farmers are facing, whether it's market consolidation, tariffs or the Renewable Fuel Standard abuse by this administration. Farmers deserve to have their voices be heard and have a seat at the table when their livelihoods are on the line."

### **Regeneration International Ronnie Cummins USA Coordinator**

**Bio:** Ronnie Cummins is co-founder and international director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA). Cummins has been active as a writer and activist since the 1960s, with extensive experience in public education, grassroots mobilization, and marketplace pressure campaigns. Over the past two decades, he has served as director of U.S. and international campaigns dealing with sustainable agriculture issues including food safety, genetic engineering, factory farming, and global warming.

**Organization Profile:** Regeneration International's mission is to promote, facilitate and accelerate the global transition to regenerative food, farming, and land management for the purpose of restoring climate stability, ending world hunger and rebuilding deteriorated social, ecological and economic systems.

**Supporting Quote Ronnie Cummins:** "Farmers and consumers, rural and urban America, working together can build a healthy, regenerative, economically just future. Organic, agroecological, and regenerative food, farming, and land use have the awesome power to restore our soils, environment, rural economy, climate, public health, and our democracy. That is why Regeneration International is proud to join Family Farm Action calling for a Farmers Bill of Rights."

### **Farm Aid Anna Hankins Young Farmer**

**Bio:** Anna Hankins is a young farmer, originally hailing from Massachusetts. An Iowa transplant of the past three years, Anna couldn't be happier to call the Midwest her home. She found her love of farming at a small dairy farm, not far from where she grew up. There she learned to milk cows, feed calves, and also learned about the harsh reality dairy farmers (and all farmers) face today. Anna has been involved with the National Family Farm Coalition, Farm Aid, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Student/ Farmworker Alliance and other farm and farmworker advocacy work since she was in high school.

**Organization Profile and Supporting Quote:** "Since 1985, Farm Aid has worked to build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America. We've stood with family farmers as they've rallied against the forces of a corporate-controlled agricultural system. We've listened to their heartache as corporations have squeezed their profits and pushed them from their land, and banks have refused them loans. Today, as the farm economy erases the thin margins upon which they operate, we've counseled farmers and connected them to resources that offer the best hope for survival. We've taken action, joining with farmers to protest bad policy, stand up for a democratic food system, and call attention to the importance of family farmers to our country. Family farmers put good food on our table. They are the stewards of our soil and water. Family farmers strengthen our local economies and are the backbone of our communities. Today's pro-corporate farm and food policy is bankrupting them—and the future for all of us. "Farm Aid's vision of agriculture is one that is guided by family farmers; is controlled locally, by the people living in farm and rural communities; sustains soil, water, and community health; and builds wealth in local communities and rural economies for future generations. To fulfill that vision, we need policies that expand access to land, credit and fair markets; pay farmers a fair price; and create equity and opportunity for all farmers. These are some of the principles laid out in the Farmers Bill of Rights. We stand behind these values and call on our leaders to put them into action to benefit all Americans."

### **National Farmers Union Patty Edelburg, Vice President**

**Bio:** Patty Edelburg was elected to serve as the Vice President of the National Farmers Union at the 116th Annual Convention. Edelburg, a graduate from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and a dairy farmer in central Wisconsin, has served as the Wisconsin Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director as well as on the FSA State Committee and played an instrumental role in the implementation of programs across Wisconsin as a result of the 2014 Farm Bill. Patty has served on the Wisconsin Farmers Union Board of Directors for 12 years as well as being involved in numerous state and local agricultural organizations.

**Organization Profile:** NFU represents family farmers, fishers and ranchers across the country, with formally organized divisions in 33 states. The key to the success and credibility of the organization has been Farmers Union's grassroots structure in which policy positions are initiated locally. The policy process includes the presentation of resolutions by individuals, followed by possible adoption of the resolutions at the local, state and national levels. Members and staff of the Farmers Union advocate these policy positions nationwide.

**Supporting Quote Patty Edelburg:** "For decades our country has shirked its responsibility of maintaining fair and competitive markets for family farmers and ranchers. Extreme consolidation has drained our communities of wealth and

taken away farmers' and ranchers' bargaining power. And because of that, family farmers are going out of business, and rural communities are steadily losing the people, schools, banks, hospitals and infrastructure that make them vibrant communities. Family farmers and ranchers deserve better from our leaders, and we are proud to rally with Family Farm Action for access to fair markets."

#### **Wisconsin Famers Union Sarah Lloyd Wisconsin Dairy Farmer**

**Bio:** Sarah Lloyd farms with her husband on the 350-cow Nelson dairy farm in Wisconsin. She works off-farm for the Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) and the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative. She has served on the National Dairy Board and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and serves as a delegate to her dairy cooperative, Foremost Farms.

**Organization Profile:** Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization, is committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement.

**Supporting Quote Sarah Lloyd:** "My husband and I are dairy farming with his family, and things are becoming increasingly desperate. Our input prices keep going up and up, but yet the prices paid to us for our milk are consistently low. We are told that we just need to tighten our belts and be better business people. It is convenient for agribusiness to try to make farmers think that this is their individual problem. We're done with that way of thinking. We are coming together with other farmers to demand a Farmer Bill of Rights for all family farmers!" Sarah Lloyd, Wisconsin dairy farmer with the Wisconsin Farmers Union.

#### **Indiana Farmers Union, Greg Gunthorp**

**Bio:** Greg Gunthorp, along with his wife and three kids, own and operates a pasture-based livestock operation in North East Indiana. They supply antibiotic-free pork, chicken, duck, and turkey to some of the best restaurants in Chicago, Indianapolis, and the surrounding region. Greg has been very active in the Sustainable Agriculture movement in the United States.

**Organization Profile:** Indiana Farmers Union is a grass-roots organization that works to protect the social and economic well-being of family farmers throughout Indiana.

**Supporting Quote:** "Indiana Farmers Union has been working since 1955 to protect and enhance the economic well-being and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through advocating grassroots-driven policy positions adopted by its membership. Access to clean food, clean air, and clean water has served as a longstanding foundation for our policy initiatives, but corporate consolidation, which cripples competition, increase prices, and reduces innovation in the food system, continues to threaten the livelihoods of our farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. It's time we enact a Farmers Bill of Rights and demand policy that puts public health first, over the special interests of corporations and their industry organizations."

#### **National Black Farmers Association John Boyd**

**Bio:** John Wesley Boyd, Jr. resides in Baskerville, Virginia with his wife Kara Brewer Boyd. He is a fourth-generation farmer, civil rights activist and the founder of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA), National Women's Farming Association and (co-founder) Association of American Indian Farmers. He owns/operates a 300-acre farming operation growing soybean, corn, wheat and produce in addition to raising beef cattle, American Guinea Hogs, Nigerian Goats & Chickens.

**Organization Profile:** National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) was founded in 1995 to help Black farmers gain access to state and federal programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and to educate the Black community about farming through effective outreach and technical assistance.<sup>3</sup> Representing 109,000 members in 42 states, NBFA serves as the leading voice of Black farmers in America.

**Supporting Quote John Boyd:** "To feed our communities and protect the future of family farms for generations to come, we must take action on the Farmers Bill of Rights to protect fair, open markets and access to capital. The Trump Administration's tariffs and agricultural policies are hurting America's small family farms. Many are facing farm foreclosures and bankruptcies. Help protect farmers and their rights."

### **Association of American Indian Farmers Kara Boyd**

**Bio:** Kara Brewer Boyd (Lumbee): President of the Association of American Indian Farmers which provides advocacy and technical assistance to American Indian farmers and ranchers. Kara is Air Force Veteran who has served as a member of the North Carolina Indian Child Welfare Standing Committee and appointed to a Legislative Committee to address Indian Children Welfare laws and concerns of American Indian families.

**Organization Profile:** Association of American Indian Farmers nonprofit organization works diligently to improve the quality of life on reservations and off in rural and urban communities through improved agricultural outreach, technical assistance, access to credit for small farmers and family farm business development for Native American farmers and ranchers. Mission – Association of American Indian Farmers is dedicated to serving American Indian Farmers.

**Supporting Quote Kara Boyd:** "Association of American Indian Farmers (AAIF) fully supports the Farmers Bill of Rights. As Indigenous people, we have been stewards and caretakers of these lands for centuries. Farmers must never forgo protecting our Food Security, Natural Resources and Control of Land Use (No Imminent Domain). #WaterIsLife #NoWaterNoFarmsNoFood"

### **National Family Farm Coalition Jim Goodman**

**Bio:** Jim Goodman is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science, he also holds a Masters in Reproductive Physiology from South Dakota State University. Jim and his wife Rebecca ran a 45-cow organic dairy and direct market beef farm in southwest Wisconsin for 40 years. Jim is a board member of Midwest Environmental Advocates, Family Farm Defenders and is the current board president of the National Family Farm Coalition.

**Organization Profile:** Founded in 1986, National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) represents 30 family farmer, rancher, and fishing organizations in 40 states. NFFC unites and strengthens the voices and actions of its diverse grassroots members to demand viable livelihoods for family farmers, equitable access to resources, safe food for all, and economically and environmentally healthy rural communities.

**Supporting Quote Jim Goodman:** "We believe in a Farmers' Bill of Rights because we know that Family farmers, ranchers, and fisher-folk will succeed when they have equitable access to resources and open markets not controlled by multi-national corporate interests and are enabled to achieve fair prices and wages, provide healthy food for our communities and protect the environment. Rural America offers plenty of opportunity when producers and workers are allowed to succeed financially and to rebuild the infrastructure that has been eroded by decades of low prices and wages, neglected public education and government apathy, overall."

### **American Grassfed Association Sherri Dugger**

**Bio:** With nearly two decades of experience editing magazines and books, Sherri Dugger now puts her media and public relations experience to work in the agriculture field. Dugger serves as Executive Director of Indiana Farmers Union, as Program Director for American Grassfed Association, and as a Midwest outreach consultant for Earthjustice. Dugger resides on a small farm in Morristown, Indiana, with her husband, Randy.

**Organization Profile:** American Grassfed Association (AGA) is a national organization that provides certification, market support, education, research, and advocacy on behalf of grassfed producers and supporters. AGA offers independent family farms and ranches use of the first and only national grassfed certification program developed by grassfed ranchers, scientists, veterinarians, and industry experts.

**Supporting Quote Sherri Dugger:** "American Grassfed Association supports the call for a Farmers Bill of Rights for many reasons. Daily, we work with American Grassfed Association producers who labor to raise premium products for a market of health-conscious consumers. These independent farmers and ranchers struggle to stay afloat in a food system that puts the needs and wants of special interest organizations and multinational corporations before their own. Both independent family farmers and consumers suffer from the current American system of agriculture, which prioritizes the production of cheap and deceptively labeled food over the health and wellbeing of communities we're supposed to serve."

## **Rural Organizing John Russell Fall Creek Farm**

**Bio:** John Russell is a rural millennial. He grew up in a small Ohio Valley town, earned an agricultural science degree from Cornell University, and returned to Central Ohio to start Fall Creek Farm, a 21 acre produce farm and stump grinding business he's run for the last six years. John ran for State Representative in 2016 and in the special election for Ohio's 12th Congressional District in 2018. He's speaking today on behalf of RuralOrganizing.org.

**Organization Profile:** RuralOrganizing.org is committed to pursuing creativity, equity, and justice at all organizational levels and throughout all programs. We strive for proactive communication, reconciliation, and mutual respect. And we always see the humanity in others.

**Supporting Quote John Russell:** "RuralOrganizing.org is fighting for a rural America that is empowered, thriving, and equitable and we've seen, first hand, how Wall Street and agribusinesses are rigging the system in rural communities. The Farmers Bill of Rights is a critical tool in the fight to protect our rural way of life and will prevent multinational corporations and monopolies from concentrating and extracting wealth out of our communities."